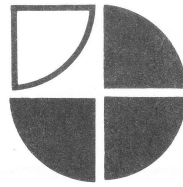


MISSION FOCUS



When Christians and Muslims Meet

ROELF S. KUITSE

In the beginning of this century great dreams were dreamt in mission circles—dreams about **dying world-religions**. Religions like Hinduism, Buddhism, and Islam would not be able to survive the collision with modern civilization based on science and theology. They would disintegrate and die. Christianity would be the surviving victor. Seventy and eighty years later we know history went in a direction totally different from these dreams.

The encounter with the modern world brought world religions into a crisis but also led to a **resurgence**. The American missionary Samuel Zwemer, known as "Apostle to Islam," wrote in 1916 a book about "the disintegration of Islam." Some fifteen years later he acknowledged he had been wrong in his expectations. In his inaugural at Princeton he spoke about the subject, "The Renaissance of Islam." Christianity has not made much progress in areas where Hinduism, Buddhism, and Islam are represented. The church has grown largely where the primal religions are practiced. It has become clear that organized Christianity also has some difficulties with modern society. There are no easy victories; modern civilization is not an ally.

We want to focus our attention on the **relations of Christians to Muslims**. What has been and is the Christian's attitude with regard to Islam and the Muslims?

Historical Christian-Muslim relations

The birth and quick progress of Islam has led to different reactions—on the emotional level a reaction of **fear** and dismay, and on the theological level a reaction of **amaze-**

ment, of facing an insoluble **riddle**. Was Satan at work destroying God's church? Was it the Antichrist? Or was God punishing his church because of its unfaithfulness? Was Islam a Christian sect? Different answers were and are given to this burning question.

Fear has played a very important role. When fear takes possession of people, reality becomes distorted, and others are seen as enemies. This has happened in regard to Islam and Muslims. Fear has deformed the reality of Islam. Many times Christians have written in a negative and derogatory way about Islam and its prophet Muhammad. The dark side of this religion was stressed. This negative, **deformed image of Islam** is still alive among many Christians and even among some missionaries. Ignorance about the tenets of the Islamic faith is great. Many books and articles written by Muslims in defense of Muhammad and Islam are written against "the invectives of the missionaries," as it is said by Haykal in the introduction to his book, *Hayat Muhammad* (The Life of Muhammad). Missionaries don't have a good name among Muslims. Their negative way of speaking and writing about Islam—and especially about Muhammad—has wounded the feelings of pious Muslims.

Fear also leads to **aggression**. The other person or idea is treated as an enemy. Violence, fighting with the sword, and

Roelf S. Kuitse is interim director of Overseas Mission Training Center, Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries, Elkhart, Indiana. His first missionary service was in Indonesia. Later he was the Islam in Africa Project advisor for Ghana and a pastor in the Dutch Mennonite Church.

holy war have been responses from the side of Christians to the challenge of Islam. The Crusades, "to slay for God's love," fought Islam on divine authority. During two centuries Christians attempted "to cleanse the earth" of Islam, as it was said at that time. According to many Muslims, the story of the Crusades does not belong to the past. The second chapter of this story was written during the period of colonialism and imperialism. Muslims experienced this period as an attack on the house of Islam. The third chapter in this ongoing story is the creation and continued existence of Israel which many Muslims see as an attempt to destroy "the dar-al-Islam," the house of Islam. This kind of violence and aggression has caused deep distrust among Muslims. They also distrust the work of Christian mission, which they regard as a close ally of the colonial powers. A Muslim writer, Abder Kabir Khalibi, wrote about "la mémoire tatouée," the tattooed memory of Muslims.

Aggression can be aggression with the **sword**; it can also be aggression with the **word**—verbal aggression. At first, the verbal sword was used in apologetic self-defense to ward off the attacks of Muslims on doctrines like the trinity, the deity of Jesus, the atonement at the cross. Later the word was used as a sword to attack. The nature of Islam—as a religion which pretends to be in harmony with human reason—leads easily to discussion on the rational level, argument against argument. Human reason can be a means of proving the truth of one's own religion and the untruth of another's religion. Many books have been written along these lines. One example is Karl Gottlieb Pfander's *The Balance of Truth*, a book used by many missionaries. By weighing the one (Islamic) truth against the other (Christian) truth, the real Truth would prevail as it was brought to light on "the scales of truth." It soon became clear, however, that the result depends on who is handling the scales, a Muslim or a Christian.

An incorrect conclusion is that in the past the meeting of Muslim and Christian has always been characterized by controversy. One could think of Charles de Foucauld and his "petits frères du Sacré Coeur." His aim was to be present among Muslims in Africa, praying and contemplating. Foucauld attempted to live among Muslims "the hidden life of Nazareth." This prayer and contemplation would hasten the moment in which Muslims—as "sheep of the other fold"—would learn to know and to acknowledge their Shepherd. It reminds us that prayer has always been stressed very much in the Christian meeting with Muslims. Henry Martyn, to mention only one example, once wrote: "I have lost all hope of ever convincing Muslims by argument. . . . I know not what to do but to pray for them."

This silent, praying presence has not satisfied others. They have emphasized the importance of witness through service. The care for the weak, the poor, and the sick—for those who have no helper—has been regarded as the only necessary and possible witness of Christ among Muslims. In many Islamic countries another form of presence or witness is not possible or tolerated by the government.

March 1981
Volume 9 Number 1

MISSION FOCUS



- 1 When Christians and Muslims Meet
Roelf Kuitse
- 5 The (Sufi) Mystical Orders in Popular Islam
David W. Shenk
- 10 Chronicle
- 13 In review
- 20 Editorial

EDITORIAL COUNCIL

Editor Wilbert R. Shenk

Managing editor Willard E. Roth

Review editors Adolf Ens, Peter M. Hamm

Other member Robert L. Ramseyer

Editorial assistants Rebecca E. Miller

Merlin Becker-Hoover

MISSION FOCUS (ISSN 0164-4696) is published quarterly by Mennonite Board of Missions, 500 South Main, Elkhart, Indiana. Single copies available without charge. Send correspondence to Box 370, Elkhart, IN 46515. Second-class postage paid at Elkhart, IN 46515. Lithographed in USA. Copyright 1981 by Mennonite Board of Missions.

Finally we note the attitude of those who have turned their back on Muslims. In their opinion it is much better to pay time and attention to those who are adherents of primal, traditional religions before they have been reached by Islam. When people have once been influenced by Islam, they are out of reach of the gospel, according to this view. This "prophylactic-Islam-mission" (Spencer Trimingham) has been the background of large mission organizations in Africa like the Sudan United Mission (S.U.M.).

Continuing kinds of Christian-Muslim relations

So much for the past. We have tried to give a bird's-eye view and have had to omit many important and fascinating details. What about the present? The colonial era has ended, at least politically. What about the meeting of Muslims and Christians in this changed and changing world? Three words can be used to outline different attitudes—antithesis, synthesis, and dialogue.

Antithesis involves the antagonistic, negative attitude towards Muslims and their religion—a continuation of attitudes in the past. Muslims are regarded as threatening Christians' security. The differences and the distance between both religions is emphasized. One can find a tendency in this direction especially among those churches that have to live as a small minority in an Islamic world. This attitude also finds expression in aggressive evangelism; many times this kind of evangelism is not sensitive to "the tattooed memories" of others. In a country like Indonesia this has caused much harm.

In **synthesis**, Christianity and Islam belong to one family, together with the Jewish religion. These religions differ totally from religions like Hinduism and Buddhism. History is important to all three as the field of God's revelation. The belief in one God is emphasized; prophets are messengers sent by God into the world; in holy scriptures God's message and will are laid down. When we read the Qu'ran we can read about Abraham and Moses, about Mary and Jesus. This has led some people to stress the similarity between Islam and Christianity. In what the Qu'ran says about Jesus they see the possibility for a rapprochement between the two religions.

What does the Qu'ran say about Jesus? We read about his wonderful birth as a son of the Virgin Mary; we read about the miracles he performed. He is called "word of God," "spirit of God." It is said that he was raised to God after people had tried to crucify him. These passages about Jesus and the names given to him are interpreted by people who favor the synthesis in the light of the New Testament. And so it is said that Muhammad—had he been consistent in his thinking—should have accepted Jesus as son of God because he accepted the virgin birth. The miracles Jesus performed prove that in the Qu'ran he had a special position, according to this view. So do the descriptions, word of God and spirit of God. They are seen and interpreted by these Christians against the background of Johannine incarnation theology.

Interpreting and explaining the Qu'ran in this way is a violation of the message of the Qu'ran. It is an attempt to christianize this message. One should try to understand the message of the Qu'ran in its own context and not in the light of the New Testament. In the Qu'ran Jesus does not have a special position. He is regarded as one of the prophets, called by God to preach his message, to make known his will to his people. All the prophets have the same

message. Jesus is the last of the long line of prophets preceding the last prophet Muhammad, "the seal of the prophets." His wonderful birth is only a sign of the power of God. It is nothing special—Adam was also created, and the birth of Jesus is put next to the creation of Adam. Not only Jesus performed miracles; other prophets—like Moses—also performed miracles. And it is stressed again and again that these miracles have been performed "by God's leave." This is emphasized in order to make clear that there is no reason to deify Jesus. He is only one of the prophets, and Christians have gone astray—according to the Islamic view—by deifying one of the prophets of God. When the Qu'ran speaks about Jesus as word of God or spirit of God, these words should not be interpreted in the light of the Gospel of John. These words are an indication that Jesus was created by the divine word through the spirit of God.

Those who favor synthesis face the difficulty of the message about the cross which differs totally in Islam and Christianity. The Qu'ran denies the crucifixion. People intended to crucify Jesus; there was enmity and hate against him. Jesus was prepared to go the way of the cross. Yet the crucifixion did not happen because God intervened in order to save Jesus from the hands of humans. It only **seemed** as if they had crucified Jesus; in fact it did not happen. "It was made to seem so to man, because it could not possibly be so with God" (Kenneth Cragg). God did not and does not participate in suffering. He could not tolerate that one of his prophets would die such an ignominious death as on the cross. Therefore Jesus was freed out of human hands and was raised up by God. "They (men) devised and Allah devised and Allah is the best of dividers" (Sura 3:54). Attempts have been made to read and interpret the verses about the crucifixion not happening in another way so that differences between the Muslim and Christian positions would not be so great. But it is the general opinion of Muslims—based on the Qu'ran—that Jesus was not crucified.

It is remarkable that much attention is given to Jesus in the thinking and writing of some mystics. He is regarded as an example of piety, love, and asceticism. He is an example of fulfilled humanity, a humanity illumined by the light of God. Also in the writings of some modern Muslims Jesus plays an important role. To mention only one example, Kamil Hussein wrote *City of Wrong*, a book in which he describes how people violated their consciences in their attempt to kill Jesus.

Dialogue is a much used and misused word. For example, Krister Stendahl of Harvard once compared the subunits of the World Council of Churches with government departments. Dialogue, he said, was like the foreign office while the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism was clearly the colonial office. "The laughing was a trifle nervous," according to report of the meeting in which Stendahl made his remarks. That's understandable! Putting things in this way causes a lot of misunderstanding. At the other side of the wide and colorful spectrum are those who mock at people that choose "the easy way" and "satisfy themselves with a friendly interreligious dialogue over the fence and a cooperation with non-Christians toward the transformation of socio-political structures" (Beyerhaus).

In dialogue you try to steer clear of the Scylla of antithesis—self-assertive competition and Christian-ghettoism (Sundkler)—and the Charybdis of synthesis—premature harmonizing and syncretism. Dialogue is an expression of love. What does that mean?

The Meaning of Love in Christian-Muslim Relations

Taking the neighbor seriously

To love one's neighbor—in this case the Muslim neighbor—means in the **first** place to take seriously that neighbor's thinking, acting, and way of believing and expressing faith. That is not possible without the willingness to listen, to answer questions, to be challenged by another's faith. Taking the Muslim neighbor seriously involves several considerations.

It involves the **religious tradition** in which the Muslim is standing, the tradition of the Islamic community. This tradition influences a Muslim's way of thinking and acting. Therefore it is necessary to know this tradition. A person that does not want to spend time and energy in order to learn to know the other's background is showing that he or she is not really interested in the other's life, not really loving. The other person is merely an object, an object for conversion, only interesting as a candidate-convert.

We don't meet a religious tradition. We don't meet Islam. We meet **people**; we meet **Muslims**. Islam is an abstraction that does not exist as such in reality. We meet fellow human beings living in a certain situation. This situation influences our way of thinking and acting, our way of dealing with the religious tradition. Having lived during many generations in difficult situations that hardly could be changed and that yield only the bare necessities of life, these people tend to stress the all-embracing will of God which humanity cannot resist. They speak of the unchangeable will of God that has to be accepted. We speak in that case about the fatalism of Islam; but this way of characterizing Islam is not accepted by Muslims. They point to the passages in the Qu'ran where humans' responsibility and initiative are put in the forefront. Muslims who are not yet free from the fear of unseen, dark, and evil powers use Qu'ranic words and texts as amulets against the evil eye, against the threatening powers. In their situation they make use of the Islamic tradition in a special way; but this way of seeking protection disgraces Islam, according to orthodox Muslims.

Young, educated Muslims in their turn have difficulties with the way in which the orthodox, conservative Muslims experience and practice their religion. They are of the opinion that this way of being Muslim does not match the modern world and mind. That's why some of them regard Islam as an ideology suited for the modern world, avoiding the evils of capitalism as well as the evils of communism. The poor, simple fallah (peasant) who depends for his life on the products of his small piece of land will keep some Islamic rituals alongside other non-Islamic rituals that have been transmitted to him by his forefathers in order to guarantee a good harvest.

The mystic does not give much attention to the externals of his religion. For him the divine word in the heart, not in a book, is important. He values the inward pilgrimage towards unity and peace with God and not the pilgrimage to Mecca. Yet he feels and calls himself a Muslim.

Each Muslim has his own face, his own world, his own situation. This should be taken into consideration when we meet Muslims. We meet **fellow human beings**. We meet Muslims who have gained some experience in their contacts with Europeans and with Christians. They carry in their

minds a certain image with regard to white Western Christians—"the tattooed memory." Love should take into consideration these memories, these scratches on the mind.

Relating without fear

To love one's neighbor—in this case the Muslim neighbor—means in the **second** place that there is no room for fear. "There is no room for fear in love" (1 Jn 4:18). As we have seen, fear has played an important role in the confrontation of Muslims and Christians—fear of the power of Muslims, of their "fanaticism," fear of their arguments and criticism in regard to the tenets of Christianity. Love can overcome this fear and help to find ways other than pitting power against power, argument against argument, "Christian fanaticism" against "Islamic fanaticism."

The questions and arguments of Muslims can help us rethink and formulate anew the central message of the Bible. A confrontation with the Islamic message is healthy for the church in discovering the essence of the biblical revelation, the relation of church and state, the character of God's rule, the meaning of the cross, trinity, and incarnation. Better than power and an armor of arguments is a heart full of love that urges the tongue to witness about what Christ has done in one's life.

Searching for truth

Love means, in the **third** place, a delight in the truth. "Love delights in the truth" (1 Cor 13). A loving person does not need to caricature the faiths of others. Love means not comparing the tenets of one's own religion with the practice of the other's religion in order to gain a cheap victory. In love one will strive against the negative, deforming images that people have of each other's faith. The central points at issue between Islam and Christianity should be discovered.

How can we get rid of the negative images? We can try to do it via the bridge of words, by talking. Often, however, distrust and fear cannot be overcome by talking. Only by living together, by opening one's life to the other, and by practical solidarity can distrust and fear be lived away.

Love cannot but speak about its origin, its source, Jesus Christ. That means love for the sake of Jesus Christ, in the name of Christ. Often people contrast dialogue with witness. According to his view, where the one is, the other cannot be. That is wrong. In a real dialogue the ultimate questions cannot be evaded. One partner will become a challenge to the other partner by speaking about the roots of their existence, the truth on which they build their lives. For the Christian there will be the possibility and necessity "to give an account of the hope that is in us" (1 Pet 3:15). Dialogue intends to create the room, the context, in which this witness is possible through listening.

Neither the deeds and words of the other, nor the longing for quick and visible results, nor our cultural acquirements should determine our attitude, our acting, our speaking. Our attitude should be determined by him from whom we can learn what real love and concern is, what patience and humility mean—our Lord Jesus Christ. Only continuous confrontation and dialogue with him prepares us in the right way for the encounter with our Muslim neighbor.

The (Sufi) Mystical Orders in Popular Islam

DAVID W. SHENK

In all Muslim communities a persistent undertow draws the community towards orthodox moorings. The pillars of authority for Islamic orthodoxy are grounded in the Quran and Hadith. Islamic law clarifies the practice and belief for every Muslim community.

Nevertheless, the Somalis of Eastern Africa are probably correct when they say, "Culture is more powerful than religion." The "ought to" of religion is often superseded by the resiliency of culture. With volcano-like vitality, the spiritual quest of Muslims everywhere often breaks through the fossilization of orthodoxy to create new forms of spirituality, which seize the popular imagination. The fusion of popular spirituality with popular culture happens with varied degrees of intensity and tension among Muslim communities everywhere. The expressions are variegated indeed.

One of the most persistent expressions of popularity and spirituality is the cult of saints and mysticism (Sufism). In Muslim communities across the African continent saint veneration and mysticism abound. Recently I visited central Java, Bangladesh, and southern Yugoslavia and found that in these widely diverse Muslim communities, saint veneration and mysticism are persistent. And the experience and practice of saint veneration were amazingly consistent. This is especially remarkable, because in each community the orthodox institutions are always in tension with these widespread popular expressions of Islam.

The persistence of saint veneration and mysticism in spite of orthodox opposition to such practices, on such a universal scale, suggests a consistent spiritual need which orthodoxy fails to fulfill. Saint cults and mystics are attractive because they fulfill explicit need for cultural identity and spiritual experience.

This paper is, first, a brief historical-theological overview of Sufism, and, second, a more specific case study of saint veneration and mysticism among the Somalis. The specific study should be helpful in understanding similar phenomena among Muslims in other communities. This essay concludes with a suggested Christian response to the Sufi phenomena.

Sufism in Historical/Theological Perspective

Sufism emerged within a milieu of orthodox Islam about the tenth century. It mitigated the rigidities of orthodoxy by providing a way to achieve divine *gnosis* through asceticism and contemplation. It seems to have had syncretistic rootage drawing from latent mystical inclinations within the Quran itself as well as Hinduism, Buddhism,

Christianity, Gnosticism, and Neo Platonism. The first significant proponent was al-Junsid of Baghdad (d. 910).

The resistance of orthodoxy to the movement was epitomized in the crucifixion of the Sufi saint, al-Hallaj (d. 922), who asserted the possibility of divine incarnation like that of Christ. Not until the twelfth century did Sufism earn respect as a legitimate expression of Islamic faith, and this was due in large measure to the brilliant apologetic of al-Ghazali (d. 1111) who attempted to synthesize orthodoxy and Sufism.

By the thirteenth century Sufism had become institutionalized in religious orders called paths (*turuq*). Trimmingham writes, *The basis of the religious orders in Islam is the belief that the believer who desires to attain communion with God needs the guidance of one who is experienced in the "path" thereto, one who has been blessed by God on earth by special virtue (baraka), and who can act as an intermediary between the disciple and God. The founders of the tariqas were such guides and their spiritual descendants inherit their baraka (blessing and power) and continue their functions to this day* (Trimingham, 1965:232).

Sufism is a complex mystical system with a wide range of devotional literature. Pertinent texts in English for the student interested in Sufism include publications by Abun N'asr, Arberry, Trimingham, Gibb, Nicholson, Lewis, Andrzejewski, and Martin.

North-Eastern Africa: The Qadiriya

The most pervasive and missionary *tariqa* (path or way) system in Eastern Africa is the Qadiriya. It developed from an appreciation for the *baraka* of 'Abd al'Qadir ibn Abdi Salih (also known as 'Abd al'Qadir al'Jilani) who was actually more of a legist than a Sufi. The order entered eastern Africa in the fifteenth century through Harar in the Somali Ogaden and reached southern Somalia during the nineteenth century with Bardera as the initial epicenter (Lewis, 1961:220-222; Cerulli, 1957:151).

Theological issues: Logos and saints

Gadiri hagiographies ascribe to 'Abd al'Qadir the Mohammadan Light, sometimes interpreted as the *Logos* or the *Qutb*. This motion was developed early in Sufi tradition and was astutely theologized by Ibn al-'Arabi (d. 1240), who argued the pre-existence of Mohammad before creation. Trimingham encapsulates Ibn al-'Arabi's *Logos* theology thus: *Mohammad represents the Mohammadan Light, the image of God in its primary entity, the divine consciousness, the pre-creation Light from which everything was created.... The world is a manifestation of that Light; it became incarnate in Adam, the prophets, and the Aqtab (plurality of the truth axis), each of whom is al'Insan al-Kamil (The Perfect Man)* (Trimingham, 1971:161).

The *Logos* theology of the Sufis perceives of God as immanent; for the orthodox God is sovereign and transcendent. In both orthodoxy and mysticism there is little or no recognition of I-Thou encounter and fellowship. For

David W. Shenk served for many years in Somalia and Kenya. Recently he became secretary of home missions, Eastern Mennonite Board of Missions and Charities, Salunga, Pennsylvania. This paper is an abridgement and modification of a more detailed study presented at the colloquium on Christian-Muslim theology sponsored by the Islam in Africa Project at the University of Ghana in July, 1977. The full text will appear later in a compendium of papers presented at the conference.

the Sufi theologian the personal quest becomes absorption into the divine, rather than a personal relationship with the Living God. On the other hand within orthodoxy the emphasis is on submission to the *sharia*. This is not to suggest, however, that the mystics neglect the *sharia*. They do not, for it is through their submission to the *sharia* that the Sufis attempt to demonstrate their faithfulness to the divine revelation. However their spiritual quest lies in a different direction. They yearn for the presence of the divine (*ibid.* 141-142). The *awliya* who personify the divine *Logos Qutb* fulfill the Sufi quest for contact with the sacred within human community.

A Mirghani *mawlid* (veneration hymn) illustrates the phenomenon of *Logos* in human form. The following words from the *mawlid* are put into the mouth of Ja'far ibn Muhammad 'Uthman al-Mirghani, the tariqa's founding *wali* (saint or friend of God).

*My Beloved refreshed me with a draught of knowledge;
You see, my friend, my judgment is above all creatures,
I am a pillar of the universe—a gift from my Lord.
I am the treasure of lights in the midst of creation;
I am the chosen of the chosen, above the heavens;
I am the door, my authority is over east and west.
I am the flash of light above creation;
I am the first who existed (ibid.:209).*

The Sufi assumption is that the *wali* (saint) is a friend of God's who intercedes with God on behalf of the devotee, who reveals to the devotee the path of blessing, and who bestows blessing upon the devotee. The ultimate blessing is rest and peace; it is the experience of deliberate progression toward the Light. Those who become adherents of the *tariqa* of the *wali* are adopted as his sons through sacramentally affirmed covenant (*ahd*) (*ibid.*: 152-155,196). These sons of covenant form a new community of ritual faith which experience the spiritual and temporal blessings of God in a special way.

The *Logos* theology affirms that the way to acquire blessing and rest is through absorption into the sheikh (*wali*) who is the manifestation of the eternal Mohammadan Light. It is the absorption of personal individuality into the universal. The hagiographical legends purport to prove that respective *wali* are indeed manifestations of the Mohammadan Light.

Stories of light emanating from sheikhs are recurrent. For example Sheikh Hussein of Bale, Ethiopia, was observed to have jets of light issuing from his shoulders from time to time (Andrzejewski, 1974:38-39). Certainly from the perspective of the theological orientation of the *Logos Qutb*, the veneration of *awliya* and *ziyarat* (pilgrimage) to their tombs is not only justifiable, but in fact essential.

Those inclined towards more orthodox views find these Sufi notions reprehensible. Islam in eastern Africa lives with the tension between the orthodox emphasis on *tanzih* (no fellowship between God and man) (Quran CXII) and the Sufi emphasis on *awliya* (Quran V:53, 54; X:63).

Early in this century these polemics erupted in violence when the Qadiri Sheikh Uways was killed at Biyolay in Somalia. Twenty-six of his disciples also died (Martin, 1976:161, 162). The sole survivor of the attack composed a *mawlid* commemorating Sheikh Uways and his sacrificial death. Several significant lines in that hymn are as follows:

*Friend of God, Friend of God,
Uways Ahmad, Friend of God.
The oppressor of the people does not prosper,
How much less the oppressor of the Lord's anointed
(Said Sheikh Samatar).*

The poem goes on to develop a suffering servant interpretation of Sheikh Uways. Although he has died, his spirit lives on and shall triumph. The spirit of the suffering servant shall prevail over the strong arm of the oppressor. The adherents of the Uwaysia branch of the Qadiriya *Tariqa* today believe that the enormous popularity of the Uwaysia in contrast to other *turuq* is an affirmation that suffering truth does triumph over wrong (*ibid.*).

Competitive Rivalry

There is considerable rivalry between—and even within—the respective orders, based on the alleged superior *baraka* of the respective founders or current leaders. Within the *turuq* themselves commemoration of local saints often takes precedence over the original expatriate founder of the order. The following legend concerning Sheikh Hussein of Bale, Ethiopia, illustrates the point. The legend imagines a journey on foot by Sheikh 'Abd al'Qadir, the eponymal *wali* of the Qadiriya and Sheikh Hussein who is recognized throughout Eastern Africa as a local Qadiriya *wali*.

While they were traveling to Arussi the sun became hot. It became very hot and the two sheikhs suffered great hardship; then God helped them by sending a cloud which shaded them from the sun.

"Xussein, this miracle-working gift, through which we were given the cloud, to which of us does it belong?" said Cabdulqaadir.

"Do you think it belongs to you?" said Xussein of Bale.

"I think it belongs to me."

"Do you want to make sure? Or shall we leave it?"

"Let's make sure."

"All right! Let's part: the cloud will then remain with that one of us whose proof (of sanctity) and miracle-working gifts are greater."

They parted. The cloud continued with Sheikh Xussein of Bale. Cabdulqaadir, after he got scorched by the sun, went back to Xussein and the cloud (Andrzejewski:16-17).

Membership

Membership in an order is not exclusive, and many Somalis adhere to several orders. With the exception of a few of the recently educated elite, all Somalis are adherents to at least one order, although few are actual initiates. Ideally participation in an order is not predetermined by clan considerations. The agricultural *turuq* normally attract a stream of the poor and dispossessed. They become welfare associations ready to receive and nourish the needy with both spiritual and physical sustenance (Lewis, 1955:600).

Those who wish to become initiates are incorporated into the brotherhood in a formal ceremony known as *wird*. At the initiation the covenant (*'ahd*) of the order is given to the novice by the leader of the congregation in a service in which the ritual of remembrance of God (*dhikr*) is celebrated. The initiate is instructed in prayer tasks (*awrad*), and given symbols of initiation which include a prayer mat, a rosary (*tusbah*) to finger during prayer recitation, and a vessel for ablution. Thereafter he is a brother (*'ikhwan*) and is known as an aspirant (*murid*).

Most initiates never move beyond the stage of *murid*, but for the devoted there are additional stages leading to mystical perfection, spiritual rest, and union with God. Perfection is achieved by concentrating on the way of God (*tariqa*) as taught by the founder of the order (*ibid.*:590-592).

In the agricultural *tariqa* or *jama'a* communities men and women live together in normal family relationships, although both cannot be initiates of the same order. There

are distinct orders for men and women. The women's orders are dedicated to the Prophet's daughter, Fatima (*ibid*: 592).

The Cult of Saints

Devotees are attracted to orders because of *baraka* which passes through a double chain of grace from generation to generation through the lives of saints. The first chain of grace is genealogical. *Baraka* flows through genealogical descent. Therefore genealogical descent from the Prophet's lineage is coveted because that certifies that a portion of divine grace flows in one's veins. For this reason the sheikhs and clan eponyms in many Muslim communities in eastern Africa have mythological genealogies beginning from the Quraysh.

The second chain of grace involves a spiritual connection with the founder of the order (*silsilat al'baraka*), and from the founder of the order to the Prophet (*silsilat al'wird*). All leaders of orders, therefore, trace their spiritual descent to the founder, and ultimately to the Prophet himself (*ibid*.:591). Through the Prophet's linkage to the Hanif, Abraham himself becomes the ancient origin of *tariqa* faith and *baraka*.

In Somalia the Sufi saints have been fused into the structure of Somali genealogy. Whenever a religious order desires agricultural land, it must accept adoption into the lineage which claims the land. Thus gradually Sufi saints become incorporated into the lineage structure of the clan. Likewise the clans have construed all their eponymal ancestors to be Sufi saints. Some of these eponyms have pre-Islamic names, but that in no way mitigates the myth of their genealogical linkage with the Prophet, superior *baraka*, and intercessory powers (*ibid*.:595-601).

The yearly festival held in remembrance of the death of the ancestral saint is a primary symbol of clan identity and its continuing relationship to Allah. In deference to pre-Islamic belief that the soul of the departed lingers about the grave, these festivals take place at the white memorial marking the grave, or at sacred sites where he is believed to have made an appearance (Lewis, 1956:151, 154-155). Celebrations in honor of some of the most popular saints attract thousands of people from near and far. (e.g., Sharif al'Kawneyn: It is popularly held that three visits to his shrine near Hargeisa is as meritorious as a pilgrimage to Mecca) (Lewis, 1966:74). The participants seek blessing and the intercessory assistance of the saint. A central part of the celebration includes the recitation of the hagiographies of the saint, sacrifices, prayers, and *dhikr* (Lewis, 1961: 130-131; 1956:154-155).

Sometimes the *baraka* of the dead local saint attracts devotees from beyond the confines of his immediate *tariqa* or lineage segment. For example the Rahanwiin as a whole have come to recognize Saint Au Mad as the guardian of harvest. On the other hand a *tariqa* community can degenerate into a small cluster of the faithful living next to the shrine of their dead and apparently impotent saint (Lewis, 1956:595-596, 599).

Dhikr (Remembrance)

In some respects the *dhikr* chants of the various orders resemble the Cushitic *sar* dance. The participants in the *dhikr* form a circle and chant in unison while rhythmically swaying their bodies. The chanting gradually increases in tempo and involves the rapid inhalation and exhalation of breath. The chant climaxes with participants falling into

trance and epileptic-like fits which are believed to be the consummation of union with God.

Centers of Piety

Among nomadic Muslims, the *turuq* sometimes serve as a mitigant to interclan feud. Although the *turuq* are not above direct participation in warfare, normally they are accepted as peacemakers, both because of respect for the piety which they imbibe, and because membership is usually trans-clan. Furthermore religious teachers and sheikhs are spawned within the *turuq*, and with rare exception they are all associated with a particular *tariqa*. *Tariqa* piety is thus dispersed far beyond the bounds of the religious community itself through the religionists it trains. The role of the religionists in encouraging clan peace is evident especially in the Eastern Horn (Lewis, 1955:594).

These islands of piety are usually respected as communities which practice religion more faithfully than is possible by the ordinary person. Consequently warriors normally hesitate to attack a *tariqa* community. Although the Qadiriya *Tariqa* at Sheikh in Northern Somali supported the British in the campaign against Sheikh Muhammad 'Abdulle during the early part of this century, he never attacked the opposing Qadiriya settlement (Lewis, 1961: 95-100). This propensity for peace and stability within the tension of nomadic life accounts for the fact that the *turuq* normally attract a flow of the dispossessed (Lewis, 1955:600).

Mawalid

A concluding poem will illustrate the spiritual yearning and theological perception of the *tariqa* adherents of eastern Africa. This *mawalid* is in commemoration of Sheikh Murjaan who was of the Ahmediya and whose shrine is located in the Lower Juba Region of Somalia. Note that the poem also makes passing references to other sheikhs including those of rival *turuq*, a phenomenon which is not uncommon. The poem is especially intriguing because it represents a popularization of a sheikh who during his lifetime was quite orthodox. I am indebted to B. W. Andrzejewski for this excellent translation from the Arabic original. In fact, the translation retains some of the rhythm of the Arab poetical style.

Refrain: *The peace of God be on Sheikh Marjaan, my rescuer and my shelter!*

*In the name of God the Merciful, the Compassionate.
The Peace of God be on Sheikh Marjaan, my rescuer
and my shelter, The imam of the saints, the sure among
the mighty, the pillar of (our) times. Radiant you are,
endowed with knowledge; protect us against the scorching
fires of Hell!*

*Among all saints we seek refuge, above all with Sheikh
Jiilaani. He assists mankind, he is truly the intercessor
for half our people through him we ask God to deliver us
from the dread of hellfire (and to give us) a long life
spent in submission to the Merciful One, the Benefactor.
Your gifts are numerous; obtain for us the grace of
Divine forgiveness! (Andrzejewski:38,39).*

A Christian Response

Several years ago I was invited by friends to participate in several *ziyarat* at the shrines of *awliya* in several communities outlying from the town of Johar of Somalia. It

was a moving experience: the sacrificing of animals, festivities, dancing, *dhikr* and *mawlid* chants, and especially the prayers offered at the graveside. Customarily the petitioners would enter the grave site and individually present their requests. They may rub the body with dust from the grave or tie a bit of cloth at the grave as a token reminder of the prayers that have been offered.

The journey homeward after such a *ziyara* is the occasion to recount the legends of the *wali*. One of these homeward journeys is memorable. I was told why the people venerated their *Wali* Jesus. I told of answers to prayer experienced during the previous month. One person in the group became fascinated, and he asked to learn about *Wali* Jesus. This we did in the following months. Several friends joined in the discussions. I introduced them to the biblical book of Hebrews. It was a joyous experience of discovery.

Biblical Hebrews: A relevant theology

Hebrews seems to relate to the spiritual and theological aspirations of Sufi Islam. It quite explicitly recognizes certain socioreligious elements which seem to be similar to aspects of Islamic Sufism. Some of the elements are these: an intercessory/mediational priesthood; effective and evidential mediation of grace or blessing; satisfactory divine-human relationship; power; sacrifice and suffering; an alternative cultic community in tension with the larger religious milieu; progression toward the true knowledge of God so that one can experience inner rest and forgiveness; the mediation of revelation through angels; obedience to divine law; and recognition of incarnational *Logos* which is, nevertheless, somewhat tempered by the parameters of transcendental monotheism. These and other aspects of the theology of Hebrews suggest that the writer participated in a world view not dissimilar to that of contemporary Sufism. He attempted to interpret life and work of the Messiah into that world view.

The interpretation of the Christian faith and community which is developed by the writer of Hebrews is both understandable and relevant to people who have accepted the Sufi theological presuppositions with the concurrent *tariqa* sociological dynamics. This is not to suggest that Sufi theology is the same as the theology of Hebrews. It is not. But there are redemptive analogies in Sufism and the *tariqa* system which the theology of biblical Hebrews may enlarge and fulfill under the enlightening power of the Holy Spirit.

Community

Hebrews is community oriented. The work of the Messiah is to create a new and better community which is in covenant (*diatheke*) relationship to God. This covenant is mediated through the Messiah who purifies, sanctifies, and makes perfect the people of God through his sacrificial death and resurrection. The experiential knowledge of Christ removes human incapability to worship God rightly. Those who believe become sons of God; they are also referred to as the children of Christ (Vos, 1956:27-45).

Human graces such as hospitality to strangers are characteristic of the new community, a community of righteousness (Heb 13:1-17). These graces do not exclude the likelihood of suffering, for the new community of righteousness is not generally appreciated by the world system. In fact it is a called-out community, a community separate from sinners. Just as the Messiah suffered outside the bastions of religious orthodoxy on a hill beyond the

walls of Jerusalem, so the new community is called to suffer reproach outside the camp of self-centered religiosity and arrogant orthodoxy. "Jesus also suffered outside the gate in order to sanctify the people through his own blood. Therefore let us go forth to him outside the camp, and bear the abuse for him" (Heb 13:12-13).

The right worship (*latreia*) of God is of paramount importance. It is through the covenant that the new community becomes qualified to worship God; this is the essence of Christian service. The worship is direct; it involves direct divine human encounter and fellowship. It is worship in community, a regular organized gathering for teaching and worship. Chapter 6, verses 1 and 2 are ambiguous, but it seems that the author believes that the elementary doctrine of the community of faith includes an ordained leadership, right doctrine, and sacrament (Bourke, 1970:390). Planned assembly is mandatory. Neglect leads to apostasy (Vos:43-45). Believers are those who have become incorporated into the worshipping community (Heb 10:19-25).

Reality

Hebrews affirms that the Messiah is the incarnation of reality, for he is heaven come to earth. All former realities were mediated through angels and ministering flaming spirits. But the Messiah needs no mediational assistance. He is the perfect image of all heavenly reality. He is the reality behind the shadow. He is Mt. Zion, the heavenly mount, where the law is internalized and the new, eternal covenant actualized; he possesses the living eternal Word of God which upholds the universe; he is the perfect sacrifice, priest, and king. He is the genuine, the veritable extension of heaven into human history (Vos:49-87).

The writer of Hebrews generally refers to the Messiah as a Son. This description of the Chosen One as a Son who brings other sons into the family of God is an interpretation of Jesus which a sternly transcendental monotheism may find comprehensible. Furthermore, in possible deference to orthodox Jewish objections to *Logos* theology, the writer avoids the Johannine equation of the Messiah with the *Logos*. Rather in Hebrews the Messiah possesses the Living Word which upholds the universe and which pierces to the depth of the soul (*ibid.*:68-85). The Messiah as the Chosen One progresses through a threefold process of elevation from Sonship to enthronement to Lordship (Bourke:384, 385). This progression is honed and affirmed through suffering and obedience. "Although he was a son, he learned obedience through what he suffered; and being made perfect he became the source of eternal salvation to all who obey him" (Heb 3:8, 9).

For the writer of Hebrews it is what Jesus does within history which saves humankind. The Messiah is in no sense some sort of ephemeral *Logos* emanation as the gnostics believed. In Hebrews the Messiah is the One who acts within history to open the way into God's presence. He is the Pathmaker. He is the leader and pioneer of faith who makes the way through the veil which separates humans from God. He leads his believing followers into the presence of God (Heb 9:1-14; 10:19-22).

The Messiah as priest and king

Hebrews depicts the Messiah as the One chosen by God to serve the community of faith as priest and king. The writer draws on these arguments to support his position: The Messiah is sinless. He has participated fully in the

human situation; hence he understands humans. He has the power of an indestructible life, as revealed in the resurrection (Heb 4:15; 7:23-28).

Drawing from the Melchizedek analogy, the writer of Hebrews argues that the Messiah is superior in his priestly functions to any and all historical, mythical, or legendary priestly saints. For this reason all claims to genealogical reception of grace are superseded by the Chosen One. Grace through Christ does not follow a chain of physical or spiritual lineage, for the Messiah, like Melchizedek, is eternal. The Chosen One is nongenealogical. Grace is acquired individually and personally through faith in the Chosen One. That is the purport of the Melchizedek argument (Heb 5:5-10; 7:1-28). Hebrews then draws the conclusion that all other priestly systems are inadequate. They come and they go. Even the Levitical priesthood could not endure eternally (Heb 7:11-14; 9:6-14; 10:1-4). However, God has appointed the Messiah priest forever. "The Lord has sworn and will not change his mind, 'Thou art a priest forever' " (Heb 7:21). The priestly and kingly functions of the universe are placed in the hands of the Chosen One. God has appointed a Son to be the "heir of all things" (Heb 1:2).

The interpretation of the Messiah as priest is unique in New Testament literature. Only Hebrews develops this theme. The cosmological implications are startling. God is concerned with right worship, and the form of right worship is carried out in heaven. Earthly representations are only a pale shadow of the heavenly real. The Messiah presides over the heavenly worship system and performs the duties of priest in perfect symphony with God (Bourke:394, 395).

A most significant dimension to the heavenly drama of worship is that of intercessor. The Messiah is accepted by God as the perfect intercessor because he perfectly represents heaven and because he perfectly understands humans. So he intercedes before God on our behalf. "He is able for all time to save those who draw near to God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them" (Heb 7:25).

The salvation is both temporal and eternal. It is the fusion of the practical and the spiritual. "Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need" (Heb 4:16).

Sacrifice

Sacrifice is a common denominator of religion universally. The writer of Hebrews is cognizant of the human awareness of the need for sacrifice. By the time Hebrews was written, Jewish theology had developed the perception that the priestly work and the sacrifice were synonymous. Hebrews seems to affirm this notion (Bourke:394). The Messiah is both perfect priest **and** the perfect sacrifice for sin. He is the Suffering Servant who through his death and resurrection provides forgiveness of sins (Heb 9,10). "...he has appeared once for all at the end of the age to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself" (Heb 9:26).

The sacrificial self-giving of the Messiah opens the pathway for genuine divine-human fellowship. The sin which has made humans fear God is removed through the Messiah who perfects and makes clean. The experience of inner cleansing frees humans to enter freely into the presence of God.

A Song of Praise

We have concluded the discussion on Sufism with a song

of praise in honor of the Sufi Wali Sheikh Murjaan. It would seem appropriate likewise to conclude this presentation of biblical theology with a song of praise of Jesus, whom both Muslims and Christians recognize as the Messiah.

In many and various ways God spoke of old to our fathers by the prophets; but in these last days he has spoken to us by a Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world. He reflects the glory of God and bears the very stamp of his nature, upholding the universe by his word of power. When he had made purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, having become as much superior to angels as the name he has obtained is more excellent than theirs (Heb 1:1-4).

What Next?

My opinion is that a dimension to Christian-Muslim encounter today is creative interaction between specific Sufi *turuq* and specific Christian congregations. This calls for plan and commitment. In Kenya there have been several attempts by Christians living among Muslims to be a witness in community, using the *tariqa* model as a form for contextual Christian living and witness. In Indonesia Christian "power encounter" consistently supersedes the *baraka* of the Sufi saints—prayer in the name of Jesus does heal the sick! Such examples do show that when Christian congregations reflect a worshipping lifestyle, power, and theology as presented in biblical Hebrews, that congregational lifestyle and theology will often be affirmed, appreciated, and recognized by the Sufi *tariqa*. It is attractive.

References cited

- Andrzejewski, B. W.
1974 "The Veneration of Sufi Saints and Its Impact on the Oral Literature of the Somali People and on Their Literature in Arabic," reprinted from *African Language Studies*, XV
- Bourke, Myles M.
1970 "The Epistle to the Hebrews," in *The Jerome Biblical Commentary* edited by Raymond F. Brown, Joseph A. Fitzmyer and Roland E. Murphy. London: Geoffrey Chapman
- Cerulli, Enrico
1957 *Somalia, Vol. 1* Rome: A Cura Dell' Amministrazione Fiduciaria Italiana Della Somalia
- Lewis, I. M.
1955 "Sufism in Somaliland: A Study in Tribal Islam—I," *BSOAS*, XVII
1956 "Sufism in Somaliland: A Study in Tribal Islam—II," *BSOAS*, XVIII
1961 *A Pastoral Democracy* New York: Oxford University Press
1966 "Introduction" in *Islam in Tropical Africa* edited by I. M. Lewis. International African Institute: Oxford University Press
- Martin, B. G.
1976 *Muslim Brotherhoods in 19th-century Africa* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
- Said Sheikh Samatar, Interviewee
- Trimingham, J. S.
1965 *Islam in Ethiopia* New York: Barnes and Noble, Inc.
1971 *The Sufi Orders in Islam* Oxford: Clarendon Press
- Vos, Geerhardus
1956 *The Teaching of the Epistle to the Hebrews* Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Co.

Chronicle

SYMPOSIUM ON ANABAPTISM AND EAST EUROPEAN EXPRESSIONS OF MARXISM November 24-26, 1980, Elkhart, Indiana

The Symposium on Anabaptism and East European Expressions of Marxism was held November 24-26, 1980, at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries, Elkhart, Indiana. It was sponsored by Mennonite Central Committee Peace Section and the Institute of Mennonite Studies.

A number of circumstances and concerns came together to make this symposium possible:

First, while there has been limited systematic Anabaptist study on the Marxist view of Christianity, Mennonites have intersected significantly with Marxist-oriented societies.

Second, several Mennonite agencies have been sending people to Eastern European countries for study in order to increase the scope of Mennonite experience and also as a way of sharing in the life of the church.

Third, believers churches and academic bodies have had little opportunity to work through issues faced by Mennonites in a socialist context.

Fourth, the visit of an East German churchman, Bruno Schottstaedt, and the presence of North American people serving in Eastern Europe provided an occasion to bring together scholars, church leaders, and workers for a symposium focusing primarily on the Eastern European context.

The **goals** of this symposium were to assist Mennonite workers in Eastern Europe to understand commonalities and differences in Anabaptist and Marxist views of Christendom; to allow a chance for Anabaptist scholars to investigate Marxism together; and to help all Mennonites, especially mission agencies, to think about a clear Christian response and witness in Marxist social and political settings.

Presentations were these:

"Marx/Engels' Critique of Constantinian Christendom," by Paul Peachey, Anabaptist scholar and professor at the Catholic University of America, Washington, D.C., with a response by Harley Wagler, worker in Yugoslavia with Eastern Mennonite Board of Missions and Charities, Salunga, Pennsylvania.

"When Christians and Marxists Co-exist: Experiences in the German Democratic Republic," by Bruno Schottstaedt, director of the Gossner Mission in the German Democratic Republic.

"A Pragmatic Model for Critical Involvement When Anabaptists Encounter Marxists," by Dan Liechty, a student in Hungary.

"An Anabaptist Perspective on the Power Factor in Church-State Relations in Eastern Europe," by Walter Sawatsky, Secretary for Europe, Mennonite Central Committee, Neuwied, Germany.

"The Anabaptist Critique of Constantinian Christendom," by Walter Klaassen, Professor of Religious Studies and History at Conrad Grebel College, Waterloo, Ontario.

"Societal Expectations of Christians in a Marxist State," by Gerald and Sara Shenk, students in Yugoslavia.

"Anabaptism in Marxist Historiography," by Abe Friesen, professor at the University of California and noted authority on Anabaptism in Marxism.

"Anabaptism and Liberation Theology," by LaVerne Rutschman, professor at the Latin America Biblical Seminary, San Jose, Costa Rica.

"Radical Reformation and Marxism: Issues and Perspectives," discussed by symposium participants.

Worship periods were led by John Rempel, Director of Student Affairs, Conrad Grebel College; Peter Dyck, Secretary for East-West Concerns for Mennonite Central Committee; and John Driver longtime worker in South America and Spain with Mennonite Board of Missions, Elkhart, Indiana.

Bruno Schottstaedt of the German Democratic Republic challenged the limited horizons of North Americans. He noted that communism is a bad word in North America and that if our negativism were overcome, Eastern European Christians could be freed to dialogue with Western Christians. He observed, however, that peace churches have much to offer and urged exploration of possibilities for peace churches to cultivate a stronger relationship with Eastern European churches.

A number of participants urged clarification of what Anabaptists have to say to Marxists and clarification on the rationale for Mennonite interest in Eastern Europe, neither of which was covered significantly in this symposium. Historical explanations, however, were provided.

Several symposium presentations as well as reflective pieces and summary reviews by participants in the symposium are printed in the November-December issue of *Peace Section Newsletter*, Mennonite Central Committee, 21 South 12th Street, Akron, PA 17501.

Major papers of the symposium are scheduled to appear in the July 1981 issue of *The Mennonite Quarterly Review*, Goshen College, Goshen, IN 46526.

"BAD HISTORY IS BETTER THAN NONE"

An Administrative Perspective

The pungent one-liner punctuated our conversation that morning as we walked around the nondescript chapel set back in a grove of eucalyptus trees. They told me 2,500 people gather there every Sunday morning. That most certainly has no equal throughout the Mennonite world!

The secluded chapel with its bare walls and hard benches, rough stony parking lot, and temporary lean-to, scarcely looked the part. Certainly it is not a place where thousands would gather for esthetic reasons or for comfort on chilly mornings. (And chilly it is in the bone-piercing damp of this 8,000-foot-high capital city of Ethiopia on the horn of Africa.) But they come to four services every Sunday packing out the place long before the meetings begin. On Wednesday noon they stream from airline offices, banks, and businesses to meet again. The city complains about this disruptive group of Christians who interfere with the rhythm of business life.

We talked about the years of intense struggle and the dramatic clash of power in this nation. Through it all the church had become a center of life and hope drawing to itself a host of people—not only here, but throughout this nation.

But these men were restless. Violence had subsided; there is less distress. There are constant reminders of official displeasure—the kind that is expressed in sharp words rather than with guns and prisons.

With profound words, the men struggled to express their burden. They spoke of years of successful evangelism, the sure movement of the Spirit, a vast ingathering, the gospel becoming hope and light in a tremulous time. Missionaries are gone; the church stands sure and fixed.

Yet they talked of struggle and search. We spoke of leadership, of congregations led by elders and evangelists, lay persons without training, no full-time pastors. We talked of the streams of influence that flowed into the church from many sources, like streams of water projecting telltale identities into the far reaches of a bay. Some are large and visible, others less dominant yet influential and real in the multifaceted life of this church.

Had not the Spirit been moving for years in this church, as if to say that tension and struggle and suffering are sure to come and I will prepare you? Hasn't this church been a source of life and hope during these convulsed years? Hasn't the gospel been preached week after week to a hungry people?

Paul N. Kraybill is Executive Secretary of Mennonite World Conference, Lombard, Illinois.

To these doors they have come from many sources and roots. Which of these streams of influence would persevere? Who are these people? On what would they now base the teaching so sorely needed? What will be the focus which integrates their life, the doctrine and faith which grounds them in maturity and Christian growth? How can you press on to adulthood unless you teach and develop a body of faith with clarity and direction to face society and the world around? By what standards and criteria do you interpret the word, and how do you understand history?

We reflected on the Anabaptist heritage. We talked about the hesitance of missionaries to export identity and history as if it were something different from the faith they professed. There was a hint that missionaries shared the gospel while holding back on interpretations and expressions which they decided were unique, or different. They seemed to say these were only for their own traditional closed communities.

We talked about the tools and resources that bind the Mennonite churches of the West. Bonds of unity and cohesion are developed through schools, community, curriculum. There are symbols of leadership and hundreds of other ways we integrate ourselves into a people whose lives express the faith in living reality.

It began to focus. We have carried the gospel, led thousands to faith, organized congregations, built churches, developed conferences. Then we cast them on a sea of anonymity as if to say we have peoplehood and heritage and history, but that is tainted and tarnished and you surely don't want it.

"I believe what I was not taught."

That is too easy an analysis. One brother assured me that in spite of ourselves, something indeed has rubbed off. "I believed what I was **not** taught," he observed with a wry smile, and we all chuckled. He spoke for many leaders I have met in recent years who are reaching out for a clearer understanding of **their** spiritual heritage. We have naively assumed that our heritage can not be their heritage. Therein we are to be blamed. Aren't we saying that we have confused our physical and ethnic heritage with our spiritual heritage? Why do we make a distinction between ethnic Mennonites and non-ethnic Mennonites? There are no non-ethnic Mennonites. Every Mennonite is ethnic whether German, French, Indian, Japanese, Spanish, Luo, Ndebele, Amharic, or Gala.

The spiritual heritage which we treasure, which gives us our identity, provides an anchor in a time of spiritual pluralism. Did we not engage in mission to share spiritual maturity as well as evangelism?

"Bad history is better than no history."

What do we do with our history? Our brother spoke with conviction, "We must also have access to the history. **Bad history is better than no history.** We must have the

opportunity to accept or reject your history. We need to know what it is; then we will decide whether or not we want it!"

They have many choices. There are other traditions. It is impossible to suggest they begin *de novo*—become a New Testament church and from such a pure origin establish a totally new tradition. The question is not will they be influenced by other histories, but which?

One leader said to me, "If we are to be an Ethiopian church and we can not be that without influence from other traditions, then from among those traditions we choose to be an Anabaptist church, not _____."

I boarded my plane and departed, profoundly touched by this encounter. I reflected on similar conversations in other parts of Africa and throughout the world. Repeatedly I had heard a call that begins to take on focus and form. We have preached the gospel, we have organized churches, we have helped in the development of conferences; but who is providing the resource for development, maturity, identity, and doctrinal substance?

The Holy Spirit and we have generated an enormous body of resource that gives us form and structure. We have our traditions, our standards of faith, our guidelines and endless studies, our decisions, our books, our teaching materials, our reports and statements.

The Holy Spirit and we have spawned a host of small, struggling, ill-equipped churches lacking resources and tools. It is bad enough that they have so little in skills or training, in leaders and materials. This must not be compounded by holding back from them our tradition and our history, or by assuming that our task is finished when we have evangelized.

As our brother said, they will make the choice, but they must know the options. Leadership training, fraternal relationships, and the challenge of a global fellowship lay on us a new burden. New channels of dialogue, teaching, sharing, instruction, and information must be opened. We must be just as concerned to help our brothers and sisters grow into spiritual maturity, adulthood, and solid Christian community as we were to help them come to faith. They live in an even more hostile world than the one we face in the West. —Paul N. Kraybill

JOURNAL CHANGES NAME

After thirty years as *Occasional Bulletin of Missionary Research*, with the January 1981 issue this leading missiological journal has become *International Bulletin of Missionary Research*. Originally a publication of the Missionary Research Library, New York, since 1976 the *Bulletin* has been sponsored by the Overseas Ministries Study Center, Ventnor, New Jersey. Gerald H. Anderson is editor. Now a quarterly publication with over 9,000 subscribers, the *IBMR* features articles and reviews of wide-ranging interest to the missionary community.

In review

The Mennonite Central Committee Story. Vol. I: *From the Files of MCC: About Origins, Russia (USSR), Refugee Work.* . . . Vol. II: *Responding to Worldwide Needs: In Europe, The Middle East, Africa, Asia.* . . . Vol. III: *Witness and Service in North America: Peace Witness, Mental Health, Voluntary Service.* . . . Edited by Cornelius J. Dyck, with Robert S. Kreider and John A. Lapp. Scottdale, Pennsylvania, and Kitchener, Ontario: Herald Press, 1980; 159, 155, and 122 pp.; \$3.95 each (\$4.60 in Canada), \$10.65 the set (\$12.35 in Canada); (pb)

Reviewed by Theron Schlabach

These three small books bring together documents from the official life of Mennonite Central Committee—correspondence or reports from field directors or traveling MCC officials, charter-like statements of purpose and mandate for given programs, and MCC communications with governments. The editors have organized the materials into chapters covering particular fields or programs. Thus almost anyone with more than passing interest in MCC will find some section that is especially intriguing. Together the volumes do much to convey the mood and outlook of MCC and its programs. Editor Dyck in his introduction offers the volumes as resources for “writers, for study groups in congregations and schools, as well as for private enjoyment.”

The books will serve all those needs, although the reader or teacher or discussion leader should not assume too much. Some documents, especially those field directors’ and traveling officials’ reports, take the reader to grassroots issues; but position papers, findings reports, and such statements tend to summarize the enticing issues to the point of blandness.

A key chapter is the first in Volume II. Entitled “In the Name of Christ” (the MCC motto, of course), the chapter prints certain statements, for instance, on relationships among MCC, evangelism, and missions. Included is a cordial yet concerned 1957 report of the Eastern Mennonite Board of Missions and Charities. But unless the reader comes to the reading already aware of regional differences among Mennonites and of a long concern of Eastern Board leaders that social service not displace verbal evangelism, that reader will probably miss the document’s significance.

The books have many such examples. The editors provide introductions, but they are

brief. Even on small matters, the editors seem to assume that readers will already be acquainted with acronyms such as “CPS” or other codes of Mennonite life. If MCC or the editors could have found the resources and the time, might not about fifty percent more investment in these volumes have brought far more than fifty percent greater return? Especially helpful would be an introductory essay for each chapter to establish chronology, highlight issues, and reveal more of the dynamics of debate and discernment that led to all those matter-of-fact official statements.

Although the time and resources were not available for such amplification, the volumes are valuable as they are. They are attractive and readable, although printed economically by reproducing typescript. Selections are well-organized and appear well-chosen. The range of subjects is astounding. On one page the reader may find new light for scholarly research, and on another relive a day of crisis work with Mennonite Disaster Service. If some documents are bland, at least their language is down-to-earth, for MCC has been an organization of doers, most of whom seem to have been so secure in their theology and assumptions that they hardly needed to give elaborate reasons for what they did.

Anyone interested in twentieth-century Mennonite history, Mennonite social service, the life of a small denomination, practical theology and practical pacifism, or merely pictures of fairly ordinary people trying to do a little bit about some of the twentieth century’s largest human questions will find materials here. Or the books may help to understand Nephew Kent or Cousin Kendra, who came back from three years in Zaire and who are inclined to clap while the church offering is taken.

We will learn even more about Kent and Kendra in 1981, with the appearance of Volume IV, *Something Meaningful for God: The Stories of Some Who Served with MCC.* . . . Volume V, the last scheduled, is to appear in 1982: *MCC Experiences: Issues and Choices: What Would You Do If. . . ?* Evidently a practical story will end on a practical note.

Theron Schlabach teaches history at Goshen (Indiana) College. He is the author of Gospel Versus Gospel: Mission and the Mennonite Church, 1863-1944.

God So Loves the World: The Immaturity of World Christianity. By Ans Joachim Van Der Bent. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1979, 160 pp., \$5.95 (pb)

Reviewed by Clarence Bauman

Here is a prophetic, discerning, and responsible critique of the Ecumenical Movement as seen by the chief librarian at the World Council of Churches’ Geneva headquarters. After witnessing the anguish of millions in Asia, especially in the vast urban slums of Calcutta, Van Der Bent kept hearing the awful cries of the wretched of the earth ringing in his ears until his burning conscience compelled him to unreservedly expose the hypocritical irrelevance of Christendom’s presumptive intellectualism and the total inadequacy of its high-handed sanctimonious charity. That charity provides for these dehumanized illiterate masses but a drop of relief in an ocean of unmitigated misery and despair, duly administered by activist experts whose superior identity remains unquestioned and untouched by the condemned and contaminated of the earth.

The Ecumenical Movement embodies a billion Christians from 293 member churches in ninety countries on six continents with an annual World Council of Churches budget of forty-five million dollars plus thirty-five million for the US National Council (besides the several billion annually administered by the Roman Vatican). It represents more power and influence in this world than all other religions put together. The power and influence are exercised in a too self-conscious and self-serving paternalistic manner in the name of rich Christians whose rich theology disavows Jesus’ blessing upon the poor and pure in heart.

Van Der Bent claims that the integrity of the Ecumenical Movement’s inter-religious dialog is undermined, not by the dangers of relativism and syncretism as is usually feared, but by Christian absolutism and intolerance. There is too much dialog about the pitfalls of dialog and not enough authentic meeting with other faiths on their own turfs. Its mission strategy should stop shouting God’s judgment upon other faiths from its own rooftops and seek a common humanity in unity and community with Buddhists, Hindus, Jews, and Muslims, including those Marxists whose atheism is not a no to God but a yes to the world which remains divided not by Christians and Marxists but between exploiters and the exploited.

In terms of overcoming acquisitiveness, greed, and selfishness, Christianity does not appear more authentic than communism. The only way to explain the world is to change it, and if the impending threat of world famine is to be averted it will have to happen on the China model of developing industry in the countryside and encouraging people to live in villages where they are needed and can meaningfully interrelate.

Rich, powerful Christians identify neither with the pain of God nor the anguish of the cross. For that reason Islam finds the Christian theology of the cross incredible and unacceptable while Buddhism ascribes its sadistic impulse to a sick brain.

The "immaturity" of Christianity consists in its self-seeking, boastful, envious, suspicious, and offensive activism. To overcome it means to become "more honest, receptive, generous, expectant, genuinely indignant, and truly responsible" (p. 127). Such renewal can happen as God's Spirit liberates the church from its own theology of liberation to recover the secret discipline of the devout life which not self-consciously embodies the living reality of Jesus' teaching and blessing—manifest not so much by efficient fund raising as by authentic living—according to the Sermon on the Mount.

This book was written from the standpoint not of superiority but of self-criticism. Its forthright incisiveness in articulating both what the church is not and what it ought to be remains unsurpassed.

Clarence Bauman teaches theology and ethics at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries, Elkhart, Indiana.

L'Echelle sans fin. By V. Mathieu Ekra. Paris: France Impressions, and Abidjan/Dakar, Ivory Coast: Nouvelles Editions Africaines, 1977, 207 pp., CFA 1.400 (pb).

Reviewed by David A. Shank

The Endless Ladder by Ekra is a sophisticated description of the spirit world as perceived by an Ivorian Christian layman. It is an attempt to communicate his vital faith from within that perspective to the elite of his own people.

The significance of this book lies partly in the fact that Ekra writes as an active Methodist to fill a need within his own church. During the years spent within Protestant and Roman Catholic churches he never heard a sermon on the question of spirits, nor was the subject dealt with in any of his catechetical instruction. Baptized as a Methodist and educated as a Roman Catholic, Ekra later abandoned both. He rediscovered among the Protestants the practice of religious duty and church attendance, but was converted at the age of fifty by a spiritual master—his own mother-in-law who was the wife of the former president of Togo, known for her spiritual and prophetic ministry. His conversion came through an understanding of the spirit world, which gave him a key for opening the Scriptures and for knowing God.

At the time of his conversion, the author was a Minister of State in the Ivorian government; he continues today as a regular member of the government and of the executive council of the one political party in the Ivory Coast. Every Monday in the elite Methodist Church, Minister of State Ekra becomes Brother Matthew who presides or comments on the evening Bible study. *The Endless Ladder* reflects studies given between April 1974 and early 1977.

Ekra believes that behind every form of created matter there is an appropriate, controlling spirit power. Each spirit proceeds from the one and only original Spirit—the Supreme Intelligence who is the source of the created cosmos.

In this perspective, the Holy Spirit—God present in humans—is the top of the hierarchy of spirits. This is the spirit intended to empower humans to fulfill their God-created purpose on earth. The mission of Christ was to show that weak human flesh could be the seat of a power capable of defeating all forces which tyrannize humans. A *Christus victor* is presented as a model for all humanity, in spite of the fact that occasional suggestions of a docetic Christ are to be found along with strong accents of a spirit-flesh dualism. Consistent with this is the movement up towards the kingdom of heaven—the basis for the book's title, *The Endless Ladder*, itself a positive image in African thought.

Creation is seen as an ongoing process; anything is possible at any time in this continuous spiritual evolution because of the freedom which is found in all of God's works. Each individual evolves therein as one chooses, involved in a sort of race to the finish. This is a surprising non-African

individualism. It is not always clear who is speaking—the French-trained individualist who has found a faith to fit his condition, or the African who has discovered the personal dimension of faith response to the call of Christ.

Ekra strongly attacks the baptism of infants as a violation of the double fundamental condition for repentance: turning from sins **personally** committed, and a **personal** commitment to follow the new way. This is perceived as an attack upon a church carrying on an unquestioned human tradition. The author further opposes bringing corpses into churches for funeral services; criticizes the failure to practice tithing; and faults ministers for getting too involved in secular questions. The clarity of a doctrine of conversion and reception of the Spirit is striking, as is the lack of clarity regarding a positive doctrine of the church.

Sickness is perceived to be essentially a spiritual problem; healing must always include a spiritual intervention, otherwise there is only a superficial or illusory healing. One section is devoted to the importance of dreams and visions as a means of divine pedagogy.

This book constitutes a search for authenticity and integrity in faith and life. It demonstrates an awareness of a religious establishment that is not fulfilling its God-ordained function. There is an effort to discern the intent of Scripture, a desire to communicate faith to others, a confidence and freedom in the use of an idiom—in this case excellent French—which is neither that of the Western church nor of biblical language. It is a remarkable expression of the scriptural "I believed and therefore I spoke out," done honestly from the context of the author.

But like much contextualization, *The Endless Ladder* lacks historical perspective on the church and Christian thought. One can scarcely fault the author who is not a professional theologian and is a relatively recent believer in Christ. Ekra spent all of his energies since the fifties in political struggle for independence, and since the sixties for stability. He appears to have been a man on a one-track political trip who suddenly at the age of fifty discovered a more important track. Although it is not clear how the two tracks relate to each other at this point in his life, the obvious openness to the Spirit of God suggests a serious effort to bring both preoccupations onto a single track.

The so-called spiritual churches among West African independent churches bear

this name because of their preoccupation with the spirit world. Mainline African churches through missionary impact and Westernizing influences have assumed that these leftovers of animism would naturally die through a prolonged contact with the gospel and the Scriptures. Ekra's strong statement of spiritual preoccupation from within the established church is significant. One would wish that his growth and openness could be exemplary for spiritual churches evolving from within traditional African contexts.

David A. Shank serves with Mennonite Board of Missions, Elkhart, Indiana, as a teacher for Independent African Movements in Ivory Coast.

The Coming of the Third Church. By Walbert Bühlmann. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1977, 419 pp., \$8.95 (pb)

Reviewed by Calvin E. Shenk

This is a book about the priority of the younger churches in mission and the relationship of the older churches to them. The author defines the Third Church as the churches of the new nations in the southern hemisphere, in contrast to the First Church of the East (Eastern and Oriental Orthodox churches) or the Second Church, also known as the Western Church. His thesis is that the southern continents will set the agenda for the northern half of the globe, both East and West, and that the great tasks facing the world are ceasing to revolve on an east-west axis and are beginning to revolve on a north-south axis. This fact has an impact on the Third Church in its relation to the other churches. The Third Church is the church of the future as well as the future of the church. While brief mention is made of the First Church, most of the book is concerned with the relation of the Second and Third Churches.

The author gives primacy to the Third Church, but he is not overly romantic about it; nor is he only condemnatory of the Western Church. He is emphatic that the mother church must give up its tutelage, but not its responsibility. He believes that as the Western Church enters into a spirit of genuine brotherhood with the Third Church it will experience both death and resurrection.

Bühlmann believes that decolonization has improved the image of the church, but not everything has been put right. Instead churches are discovering that after liberation there are experiences of disenchantment. In the search for a new identity there will be stormy periods and periods of calm, bitterness, and melancholy. Some situations will need to be understood in light of Good Friday rather than Easter, yet he insists that the cross can never be separated from the resurrection in one's understanding of the church. Crises should not lead to apathy, neo-isolation, or prophecies of doom. Rather than spell the end of mission, these can facilitate a new era in mission.

The author believes the church has answers but not necessarily ready-made answers given in monologue as if the truth were "possessed." The church is rather a seedbed for solutions animating individuals and societies in dealing with problems. It creates spiritual infrastructures by stimulating the will to work, trust, joy, freedom, and dedication to others. It needs to alter its structures to be poor with the poor. It needs to discern the opportuneness of truth, and serve as both prophet and diplomat.

Bühlmann believes the church must not only discern between the good and the bad, but between the good and the better. He asks that the church have creative imagination, freshness, and sensitivity to the signs of the times as promptings from God. He is aware of the tension between charisma and institutionalization and is critical of institutions that become rigid and survive because of scaffolding. But he is equally critical of charisma void of institutions which bursts like soap bubbles.

This book insists that the Second Church must give up its tendencies to keep the Third Church in kindergarten or as the mere recipient of charity or as experimental stations for Western ideas. Missionaries must give up the mothering instinct with the mentality of founders with lifelong privileges. Tensions between missionaries and the local church are seen as generational rather than racial. Missionaries need to exercise more caution as not to shock the local church into premature autonomy. Sometimes in phasing out or progressive disengagement, the church is subjected to violent treatment. Instead of one-sided tutelage we need to put ourselves at the disposal of each and have complementary mutual aid. This kind of partnership no longer thinks in terms of godparents and godchildren or benefactor and beneficiary.

Within the framework of these new rela-

tionships the author attempts to focus new light on old problems. He deals with issues such as ecumenism, priestly ministry, laity, family, education, charity, development, mass media, urbanization, buildings, finance, and the relation of Christian faith to other religions. Some of these topics reflect a particular Roman Catholic tradition; in others universal applications are more obvious.

While mention is made of the First Church, I was disappointed that most of the book was concerned with the relation of the Second and Third Churches. I believe renewed attention to the First Church could help the Second and Third Churches understand more clearly their mission.

I appreciated the author's skepticism of revolution and his assertion that nonviolence is so creative that it often takes us further than violence.

I found it difficult, however, to accept his suggestion that we look for an intermediate position between absolute nonviolence and brutal violence so that force is not in only irresponsible hands.

The strength of this book is the emphasis it gives to the primacy of the church; sometimes I wanted to see more separation between the church and the world. I liked Bühlmann's emphasis on the representational function of the church, but this concept needed more clarity and specificity.

My major criticism of the book concerns its understanding of salvation in relation to other religions. The author sees the church as a "sign of salvation" rather than an "ark of salvation" and holds that non-Christians unconsciously possess the grace of Christ. For him religion is a way of salvation and a particular history of salvation. Christian witness is necessary so that the Christ present in other religions can be unveiled, the seed can become a plant, or the embryo a mature person. In these transitional stages of development, one will need to be prepared for a certain syncretism as people are allowed time for their journey to Christ and the church. I agree with Bühlmann that we often see only the faults in other religions and that we ought to look for signs of God working in them. I prefer to see religion as both a reflection of humans being in God's image and their fallenness, rather than seeing religions as made possible by God. To say that God is active in world history (history of religion) is obvious, but I have difficulty calling that salvation history.

This book is fascinating because the author is both a theologian and a pragmatist. He wants to do what we can and save what

we can; it is not a matter of doing all or nothing. Bühlmann is confident that the church can be light, hope, and courage, but his tone is more than easy optimism. He is guided by the absolute future of the "day of the Lord" but insists that the church must assume responsibility in shaping the future between now and then through comprehensive planning and prioritizing. From one perspective this book is too broad in its scope; yet its breadth stimulates the imagination and propels one toward imaginative vision for mission.

Calvin E. Shenk is the Mission Interest Coordinator at Eastern Mennonite College, Harrisonburg, Virginia. He served fifteen years in Ethiopia with Eastern Mennonite Board of Missions and Charities, Salunga, Pennsylvania.

Christianity: The Japanese Way (Monographs and Theoretical Studies in Sociology and Anthropology in Honour of Nels Anderson, No. 15). By Carlo Caldarola. Leiden, Netherlands: E. J. Brill, 1979, 234 pp., Fl 58.

Reviewed by C. Norman Kraus

Christianity: The Japanese Way is a sensitive sociological study of two significant Japanese Christian groups, the **Mukyokai** and an off-shoot from that movement called **Makuya** or Tabernacle of Christ. These movements, while not large (probably about 95,000 together), "are significant both for their complete independence from Western Christianity and their closeness to the traditional features of Japanese spirituality" (p. 209). The latter movement is a pentecostal, charismatic variant which has had extraordinary success among the lower economic classes. They number about 60,000. Caldarola, however, gives only one short chapter to them.

How to define Japanese religion itself is not immediately self-evident because of the centuries-long cultural borrowing and adapting that has taken place. Nevertheless, we can with some justification think of Shinto as the underlying and dominant stratum of religion in Japan. But this raises

a second question: How do we define religion in traditional Japanese culture? Until recently the **Kami** (god) **way** or **Shinto** was not defined as a separate institution. It was animistic in character and simply identified with the Japanese way of relating to the ethnic tradition, the existing social structures, and the surrounding natural elements. All religions which have arrived from the outside have confronted this reality in Japanese culture.

Buddhism, which was already an institutionalized religion when it arrived in Japan from China, has had to adapt to the Shinto reality in order to survive as an integral part of Japanese life. It has become the institution which deals with the realities of death and the ancestral tradition. (This, obviously, was not part of original Buddhism!) In this regard it is significant that Shinto shrines are still closely associated with seasonal rites such as thanksgiving, marriage, and the daily routine of life.

The other traditional Buddhist adaptation to Japan is Zen. Zen adapted the Samurai spirit and ethic and presented an inner spiritual way, the way of *Satori* (enlightenment). Caldarola points out that the practice of Zen as it grows deeper ceases to be a separate religious activity or institution and becomes a way of life informed by spiritual enlightenment (p. 84ff). Thus Zen adapted to the essential ethos of Japanese culture, but in choosing this way it frankly remained an elitist option.

Christianity has presented itself as a separate institutional religion, featuring attendance at regular *rehai* (a distinctively Christian word for worship), a set of rational beliefs (orthodoxy) and ethical precepts derived from the theological system, along with denominational organizational structures. How is it to be indigenized or contextualized? Shusako Endo, a Roman Catholic novelist, has written almost with despair about the great difficulty of growing an indigenous Christianity in the Japanese climate.

Caldarola's thesis is that Mukyokai has followed the Zen pattern in its indigenization of Christianity. It is a revolt against the traditional institutional Christianity which was projected upon Japan from the West. He writes, *The spirit of Zen and that of Mukyokai Christianity are substantially the same. Both are patterned on a model of human relations deeply rooted in the soil of Japanese tradition, perpetuating these relations without a crystallization into formally-defined structures* (p. 114).

If the spirituality of the movement has a Zen coloration, the content is fundamentally Christian. Following are characteristics which distinguish the Mukyokai, according to Caldarola. They emphasize the individual's experience with and relation to God rather than the institution. They make the Bible, not theology, central. They are highly disciplined, following what he calls a "Puritan morality." They depend entirely on God for the support of those who have given themselves as teachers. They are convinced that the sacred history which began in the Bible and moved through Europe and America is now being continued, purified, and will be completed in Japan. They make pacifism an essential element, since peace—the ideal social order in the mind of God—is the goal of humankind. And lastly, they have consistently and prophetically rejected the demands of the state for ultimate obedience—a position which caused them real suffering in the earlier part of this century. Whether these elements are uniquely Japanese or not, they do represent a distinctly Japanese protest against Western, denominational religion.

More distinctively Japanese are the vertical authority patterns that are accepted in both the Mukyokai and Makuya. In the Mukyokai the pattern is that of *sensei* (teacher) and *seito* (pupil), not pastoral counselor and brother. In the Makuya it is that of charismatic father and obedient family members. Both groups view Christianity as the true fulfillment of the highest Japanese values and interpret Japan's true destiny within the biblical stream of history.

This is an important and well written book. While it is a theologically informed, descriptive sociological analysis which **pleads no cause**, it urgently raises the question of contextualization of Christianity in Japan. As Japan has again moved into the forefront of world trade and politics, its people are gaining a new sense of achievement and with it a new self-identity. The fascinating and challenging question is what place Christianity will have in that new identity. If we are to judge from historical precedent, the answer to that question lies largely in the church's ability to present the **Word** in an authentic Japanese translation.

C. Norman Kraus and his wife Ruth serve in Japan with Mennonite Board of Missions, Elkhart, Indiana.

The Changing World of Mormonism. By Jerald and Sandra Tanner. Chicago: Moody Press, 1979, 592 pp., \$7.95 (pb)

Reviewed by Rodney J. Sawatsky

The actual growth rate of Mormonism is apparently subject to controversy, yet the extensive missionary endeavours of this movement continue to reap handsome dividends. While the investment of large numbers of young Mormon missionaries is a major medium in this success, the message which people are buying is not as obvious. It is doubtful that converts are smitten by the truth of Joseph Smith's revelations. More plausible is the explanation that the support system offered to the nuclear family by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints in its social and ritual practises explains Mormon success. The belief system is not inconsequential, but it seems to function more as augmentation than as the primary story. That is why this book will not likely cause the apostasy its powerful critique of Mormon thought might lead one to expect.

The Tanners are former Mormons who converted to Protestant Christianity, they tell us, after discovering numerous contradictions, inaccuracies, and deceptions in the development of Mormon belief and practise. They are now devoted to disseminating their discoveries from their Salt Lake City home primarily by means of publishing their findings under the Modern Microfilm label.

Their research appears to be exhaustive and their knowledge of Mormonism encyclopedic. They range comfortably through the full history of primary and secondary, Mormon and non-Mormon literature. Apparently Mormon scholars have on occasion conceded the accuracy of their negative findings and have worked to defend against them, while on other occasions they have been assisted by the scholarship of loyal Mormons who remain faithful even as their studies undermine orthodox interpretations.

The major point the Tanners make by implication is that *The Book of Mormon* is the product of a fertile imagination but not revelation from God. Since it is difficult to prove that Smith and his writings are not of God, the argument is made more circuitously by indicating the inconsistencies in the writings of Smith and his successors, by challenging the trustworthiness and morality of Smith and other leading Mormons, by documenting major changes in doctrine including the nature of God, of salvation, of polygamy and the recent concession to blacks, and by repeatedly suggesting that

Mormon leadership hides the truth from the rank and file. Hence, it is Tanners' task to expose the truth.

Methodologically the book is an exercise in rationalistic apologetics. As such it is a fascinating work for the student of Mormonism, indeed, possibly indispensable. A questioning Mormon or potential convert may also find this book sufficiently convincing. But this methodology has its limits. As ex-Christians know, Christians continue to believe despite such contradictions as a creator God allowing suffering, a loving God making war, four varying gospel accounts, the crusades, or the popes. Faith is complex; it includes reason but it is much more than rational. Convincing people to accept or to reject a belief system is a similar process. With reference to Mormons the Tanners have greatly assisted in arguing why not, but until the why not correlates more closely with the why, it probably will not have the effect the authors would wish.

Rodney J. Sawatsky is academic dean and associate professor of history and religious studies at Conrad Grebel College, Waterloo, Ontario.

Into All the World: A Basic Overview of the New Testament. By Richard L. Rohrbaugh. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1980, 168 pp., \$5.95 (pb)

Reviewed by Philip Bender

Many church members today possess a knowledge of the New Testament which is at best fragmentary and superficial. Most New Testament helps are either too technical or too shallow to be useful in aiding church people increase their knowledge of the gospel.

Departing from these two assumptions, Richard Rohrbaugh, assistant professor of religious studies at Lewis and Clark College, Portland, Oregon, has attempted to provide an average church member with a study tool which both reflects recent critical scholarship and relates the New Testament to today's issues.

The result is a workbook-like overview of the New Testament which attempts to "look at the tree before one focuses in detail on the leaves." In an elementary style which takes little for granted, Rohrbaugh establishes

chronology, sketches background, and summarizes the message of each New Testament book. He also introduces terms and concepts with which not all Bible readers might be familiar: synoptic, Gnosticism, oral tradition, apocalyptic. Though thumbnail, Rohrbaugh's sketch of the Jewish and Hellenistic culture and thought world in which Jesus taught and Paul and his churches lived is solid and illuminating.

The author repeatedly insists that the New Testament mirrors the effort of the primitive church to relate its faith in the risen Christ to the diverse needs and circumstances it met as the body of Christ living in the world. Because his "real aim is to hear God speak to us NOW through the Biblical story," he has included a number of practical "Try This" exercises. These activities, intended to be done in study groups, vary from discussion questions to collage-making and seek to help readers understand the teachings of Jesus and the issues which Paul addressed in their present-day form and application.

Unfortunately, the author's theological presuppositions and his preoccupation with critical methodology undermine his commendable intention to show how issues related to Christian living constitute the matrix of the New Testament, especially in his treatment of the writings of Paul. It is true that the burden of Paul's ministry and writing was eminently "practical"—to bring into being a community in which Jew and Gentile, male and female, slave and free could live together as one in Christ and serve him as Lord. Rohrbaugh's summaries of Paul's letters, however, do not adequately reflect the depth of the apostle's preoccupation and the extent to which the creation of this "one new man in place of the two" inspired and colored his writing.

Galatians, according to Rohrbaugh, was stimulated by the question of the means of personal salvation—is it by law or by faith? One could argue that the precipitating question was, "Who can hold membership in the church?"—a question which involves the means of salvation, but whose root is in issues of Jewish-Gentile togetherness rather than theological speculation. Likewise, the critical practical thrusts of Philippians (being of one accord because of Christ's servanthood) and Ephesians (overcoming the dividing wall of hostility between Jew and Gentile) are not identified.

One could even argue that Romans, so often understood as a book of doctrine, at its crucial points, such as in Paul's insistence on the sinfulness of **all** humanity (not just Gentiles) and the priority of faith over legal-

ism, seeks first to address the burning question prompted by a real-life situation: whether Jew and Gentile can live together. Again it was the shape of the community of Christ, rather than abstract theologizing, which prompted Paul's letter. Yet Rohrbach claims that Romans is the exception to Paul's pattern of addressing his churches' practical needs because it is preoccupied with the question of one's "acceptability" before God. Because of his tendency to reduce the key issues of Paul's writings to the problem of the individual's right standing before God, one is not sure whether Rohrbach really grasps the full import of his opening claim in Chapter 1, "The New Testament is the *Church's* book" (italics added).

One other basic criticism can be made of this book: its preoccupation with critical questions and methodology. One could criticize Rohrbach's tendency to easily accept the general thesis propounded by the Bultmannian school of New Testament scholarship that the gospels are unreliable historically and that somehow the Christ of faith can be detached from the Jesus of history could be questioned. One could also challenge his glibness in dissecting the text of certain letters (2 Corinthians as a patchwork of several letters, Romans 16 and 1 Corinthians 14:33b-36 as being unPauline).

Too much space is devoted to such questions as the authorship of Ephesians and the Synoptic problem and not enough to the original intent and contemporary relevance of the New Testament books. There is no question that source, form, and redaction criticism are essential for serious New Testament study. Even an average church member, whose knowledge may not surpass a few Bible stories and some theological jargon, might find them interesting. But for a book which seeks to help one step back from the isolated "leaves" of the New Testament to grasp the whole "tree," Rohrbach has spent so much time on the cell structure and life support systems of the tree that its total visibility is hardly more illuminated than before.

In sum, this book can provide handles and insights into the New Testament (especially on historical background), but it is not as effective as it could be as a basic elementary tool for showing what the New Testament really says and how it is the church's book.

Philip Bender is principal and New Testament and theology teacher at Elim Bible Institute, Altona, Manitoba.

New Horizons in World Mission: Evangelicals and the Christian Mission in the 1980s. Edited by David J. Hesselgrave. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1979, 298 pp., \$8.95 (pb)

Reviewed by Wilbert R. Shenk

This volume contains the papers from the second Consultation on Theology and Mission sponsored by Trinity Evangelical Divinity School March 19-22, 1979. The theme of the consultation was *Evangelicals and the Christian Mission in the 1980s*. The consultation addressed six areas: Christian Mission in the 1980s, Evangelicals and Totalitarian Governments, Evangelicals and Contextualized Theology, Evangelicals and Unity in Mission, Evangelicals and World Economics, and Evangelicals and Community Development. Thirteen major presentations were made, as were an equal number of responses to the last five areas, replies by several speakers, and a Findings Committee Report.

The usual problem with conferences and consultations is that the bulk of the time is spent traversing familiar ground as the first step toward fresh business. About that time the meeting is ready to be adjourned, and those in attendance are saying, "We ought to meet again to pursue this idea in greater depth." But seldom does that follow-up meeting occur; if it does, a new theme inevitably claims attention.

This volume suffers from the limitation described above. The papers are well done but break no new ground—with the exception of Paul Hiebert's on "Sets and Structures" (which has appeared in print elsewhere). One suspects there may be greater differences of viewpoint among the authors than comes to the surface here in view of the complexity of socio-politico-economic issues of today's world and differing backgrounds of experience. The book is a useful reference point in assessing the state of evangelical missiological thinking today.

Wilbert R. Shenk is Director of Overseas Missions, Mennonite Board of Missions, Elkhart, Indiana.

Witness to the World—The Christian Mission in Theological Perspective. By David J. Bosch. Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1980, 277 pp., \$18.95

Reviewed by Roelf S. Kuitse

This book is not a book for the expert, but, according to the preface, for the general reader. It starts—like all books about missiology nowadays—by quoting the famous words of Walter Freytag: "In the past mission had problems; in the present mission itself has become a problem to many people." The crisis of mission is the starting point. The writer relates this crisis to the totally new and changing situation in which we have to do mission work in our time. This new situation has led in the lives of some people to "a terrible failure of nerve about the missionary enterprise" (Max Warren).

For David Bosch the new situation means a challenge — to look again at our concept of mission in the light of the Bible, to learn from what history teaches us about the ways in which previous generations have understood and interpreted the biblical mandate, and thirdly, to ask ourselves whether evangelical and ecumenical models do justice to the fullness of the biblical message.

The best part of the book is the part that deals with the biblical foundation of mission. Bosch does not focus attention on isolated texts or passages dealing with mission, but on the missionary dimension of the biblical message. This message is about a compassionate God who shows his compassion to the world in the election of Israel and in Jesus Christ. The second important feature of the biblical message is that God reveals himself in history. Another important feature is that God uses the weak, the suffering, those of no consequence as his witnesses to the world (the suffering servant of the Lord). A fourth feature is the concept of the mission of God, the *missio Dei*. These four essential elements are of decisive significance in the biblical message. They cannot but lead to mission.

The historical part of the book (the historical perspective) looks at the history of the church in the light of what the Bible teaches about God's concern for the world and mission in the world. This historical survey covers almost half of the book and pays special attention to modern developments. Mennonites are not forgotten; a positive chapter treats the Anabaptist view of mission. The aim of restoring the early church, the conviction to be the faithful

church (with the three exterior marks of a pilgrim church, a missionary church, and a martyr church), and the eschatological motive played an important role in the Anabaptist view of mission.

The historical survey leads to the last chapter about the present-day situation. In some parts of the world the evangelical, ecumenical discussion about mission plays an important role. The writer speaks about "the evangelical theology of mission" and "the ecumenical theology of mission." I doubt whether these animals exist! Many evangelicals and many ecumenicals will not recognize themselves in the pictures drawn on the last pages of the book—"evangelical missiology," an emaciated gospel; "ecumenical missiology," a diluted gospel. Bosch tries to build bridges and keep the dialogue going by asking questions of both sides, by correcting one-sidedness, and by trying to create room for the fullness of the biblical message.

This is an excellent book. Well written, in a clear style, it is stimulating and encouraging. This volume takes its place in a series being published in Great Britain as Marshalls Theological Library (Marshall, Morgan and Scott) and in the United States as New Foundations Theological Library (John Knox Press).

Roelf S. Kuitse is interim director of Overseas Mission Training Center, Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries, Elkhart, Indiana.

Three Mile an Hour God: Biblical Reflections. By Kosuke Koyama. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1979, 146 pp., \$5.95 (pb)

Reviewed by Robert Enns

Kosuke Koyama, Japanese theologian who has served in Thailand, Singapore, and other places in Asia and is presently teaching in New Zealand, describes this short book as "a collection of biblical reflections by one who is seeking the source of healing from the wounds, the festering sores, inflicted by the destructive power of idolatry." War, injustice, racism, and other forms of oppression are viewed as the results of modern idolmaking and idol worship. Healing is to be found in the "three mile an hour God" whose pace is the human speed of walking and who demonstrated the depths

of love by coming to a full stop in Jesus' death on a cross.

Three Mile an Hour God consists of forty-five brief meditations organized into four sections. Each meditation is prefaced with a biblical text which provides a basis for personal reflection on a broad variety of topics. No attempt is made to provide careful exegesis or systematic analysis of issues. General themes move from introspection ("Life Deepening") to international relationships ("Justice Insisting"), with sections on interdependence ("World Meeting") and national policy ("Nation Searching") in between. The bibliography reflects the diverse influences which Koyama brings to his meditations—*Dialogues of the Buddha*, Karl Marx, Harold Lindsell.

Several themes run through this varied collection of reflections. Koyama seeks to take seriously both his biblical faith and the Buddhist and Japanese traditions which are also very much part of his reality. He is critical of "syncretism," but welcomes an "ecumenical movement" in which by coming to Christ, "one should see his own culture blessed and enriched." He rebukes Christians who talk too much, listen too little, and tend to consider themselves to be somehow less subject to God's judgment than adherents of other faiths. Other recurrent themes include criticisms of inappropriate uses of technology, warnings against resurgent nationalism, a call to more active Christian peacemaking, and a plea for more equitable sharing of the earth's resources.

As one who has had a long-standing interest in Japanese culture and society, I appreciated learning from Koyama's way of conducting a dialogue between his cultural heritage and his Christian faith, using this as a basis for examining issues of personal, social, economic, and political relationships. As one with specific concerns with the nature, shape, and function of the community of believers within the larger sociocultural context, however, I was disappointed to find little in Koyama that makes the congregation or gathered community a unit of analysis. But one cannot do everything in 146 pages, though there was space to twice (p. 114 and p. 126) relate New Zealand's 1840 Treaty of Waitangi and the position of 650,000 Koreans in Japan to the biblical motif of "no room in the inn."

Robert Enns teaches sociology at Fresno Pacific College, Fresno, California.

Editorial

February 18, 1981, marks the bicentennial of Henry Martyn's birth at Truro, England. An outstanding student at Cambridge, Martyn was drawn to missionary service through reading David Brainerd's *Journal* and William Carey's regular reports from India. Since the East India Company officially barred missionaries from entering India at that time—Carey lived under Danish protection at Serampore—the only way to get there was as a chaplain of the Company.

Martyn arrived in India in 1806. Six years later, on October 16, 1812, he died of tuberculosis at Tokat, Turkey, while enroute home to England. During the five years in India and one year in Persia, this gifted linguist worked tirelessly, despite failing health, on translations of the New Testament into Hindi, Arabic, and Persian. His death was widely reported in Great Britain. After his friend, John Sargent, published Martyn's *Journal* in 1816, it became a spiritual treasure. In death, Martyn had left a three-fold legacy: as translator, as Christian mystic and saint, and as apostle to the Muslim world.

In the course of translating the Christian Scriptures, Martyn had long intense dialogues with his Muslim helpers and Muslim religious leaders. These encounters impressed on him the importance of entering as deeply as possible into the Muslim world of thought in order to discover the mind of Islam. But his own qualities of radiant goodwill and empathy contributed to his effectiveness. He wrote in his *Journal*: "Zeal for making proselytes they are used to and generally attribute to a false motive; but a tender concern manifested for their souls is certainly new to them, and seemingly produces corresponding seriousness in their minds." Though he was willing to engage them in serious argument, he sensed the limitations of argument: "I wish a spirit of enquiry may be excited, but I lay not much stress upon **clear arguments**; the work of God is seldom wrought in this way." What kept his protagonists in debate returning to Martyn was his deep love—for God and his fellow human beings.

Henry Martyn's life stands at the headwaters of that stream of missionary history devoted to sharing the Christian message with Muslim peoples. That stream has meandered over vast stretches of the earth. It has seldom carried success with it. Muslims have been highly resistant to the gospel. This stream of witness has seldom flowed along a single course. Some Christians have insisted that it could best be channeled via one method while others pursued a different means. Some of the reasons for this resistance and the resultant tactics on the part of missionaries are outlined in the lead article by Roelf Kuitse. It is not a record in which we can take much satisfaction. Nevertheless, it is a record with which we ought to come to terms.

Despite sustained contact between Muslims and Christians in various parts of the world since Martyn's day, the obstacles remain much the same: a history of mutual mistrust and a feeling on the part of Muslims of having been victimized by Christians, profound theological differences, and a fear of proselytization. Over

the past two centuries many Muslim nations have suffered the ignominy of being pawns in the power struggle between Western imperialists. This has offended the Muslim pride at a deep level.

In recent years Christians have been startled by the increasingly bold initiatives Muslims have been taking politically and religiously. Islam has its own history of missionary expansion, and in recent years a new wave of Muslim missionary effort has made itself felt in many Western countries as well as in the continued expansion of Islam across the African continent. Petrodollars help to finance this new thrust in Muslim evangelization. As the West has increasingly fallen prey to secularism and has rejected religion, Muslims feel they have a message which the people of the West need to hear: worship of the one true God.

As already mentioned, the question as to how best to share the Christian message with Muslim peoples has occupied missionary leaders for a long time. In the 1970s two major conferences were held which touch on this issue. Evangelicals sponsored the North American Conference on the Evangelization of Muslims at Colorado Springs, Colorado, in 1978. The World Council of Churches held a conference on *Christian Presence and Witness in Relation to Muslim Neighbours* in Mombasa, Tanzania, in 1979.

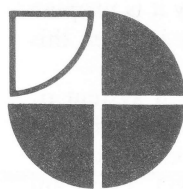
Perhaps on no other frontier where the Christian meets another faith are we so tempted to deny the gospel. On the other hand, some people seem not to have learned anything from the history of past Christian-Muslim encounters. They give little evidence they know how to respect Muslims as people with a proud past and a long memory. They blithely lay plans for a new assault on the house of Islam. Not only is this perceived as a calculated insult to Islam, it is also an insult to the gospel.

On the other extreme are those who, for a variety of reasons, believe the Christian should not seek to share the faith with adherents of other persuasions. This, too, distorts and hides the gospel.

Two versions of the gospel are available to the world. The one version is accessible to the literate through the Christian Scriptures. The other version is mediated through human witnesses. This version is by far the most "read" of the two. To wit, the Crusades of the 11th, 12th and 13th centuries have etched in Muslim memory an image of Christians which to this day stands between them and an encounter with the gospel. One of the biggest stumbling blocks for the Muslim to listen to the gospel is the example of those who name themselves Christians.

The life of Henry Martyn remains a remarkable reminder that the attractive power of the gospel does not lay in polished argumentation or dazzling technology. The quality of life of the witness is crucial: does that life radiate *agape* or does it bespeak ulterior motives? To live as a witness among Muslim peoples requires the finest in preparation—in cultural sensitivity and historical awareness. But all of that preparation must be placed in the service of divine love.—Wilbert R. Shenk

MISSION FOCUS



Latin American Liberation Theology from an Anabaptist Perspective

LAVERNE A. RUTSCHMAN

As a student in the Bible Institute of Los Angeles forty years ago, I felt theologically secure. I had little question that the notes in my Scofield Reference Bible provided the key for a correct and final understanding of the Scriptures. Dispensationalism seemed to make clear God's plan of salvation through the course of history. Although I lost my copy of that Bible many years ago and have not replaced it, those concepts are a part of my background. I continue to respect the man who used his many talents as a lawyer to interpret God's word for his epoch.

Theological currents are usually short-lived even though they tend to reappear in new forms. Most of us have been exposed to a series of theologies—fundamentalism, modernism, neo-orthodoxy, secularization, death of God, hope, revolution, and many others. Each has left its mark. Each calls our attention to some aspect of biblical teaching; but in doing this, essential parts of the gospel may be neglected.

During the past decade a new way of doing theology, rather than a new theology, has appeared in Latin America. Doing theology promises more durability because it is not simply another abstract theological theme to be developed. More accurately, it is a way to relate faith to humanity's fundamental struggle for freedom to live in a just society under God. It underscores consistent action on behalf of the poor rather than systematic content. As a theology of the way it is contextual rather than doctrinal. It departs from other theologies in its method and agenda. Its primary tools are the social sciences and not the humanities. Sociology is now assigned a preferential position in the theological education curriculum. The Bible is studied in its social context, ancient and modern, and not only as literature, history, and theology.

In a previous essay (1980) I described Liberation Theology in Latin America as "a theology whose time has come" by looking at it in its historical, sociological, empirical, and psychological contexts. This investigation also included a study of its methods and program and ended with suggested areas of convergence as well as of differences with radical Anabaptism. In this paper I would like to look briefly at three frames of reference that will help us to understand Liberation Theology as it is being done in Latin America and enable us to assess its impact upon missions as well as to identify areas of interaction between it and our Anabaptist tradition. These include the relation between ideology and faith as understood in Latin American Liberation Theology, the relation between religion and society in the same context, and the hermeneutical circle as described by Juan Luis Segundo.

Ideology and faith

Because there is no consensus in the use of the term **ideology** among liberation theologians, it is not easy to avoid confusion in evaluating the relation between ideology and faith in their writings. For some, as for Marx, ideology is always considered in a pejorative sense, an accusation. On this level, following Mannheim, it is defined with relation to the system of ideas that contributes toward maintaining the existing order, while the term **utopia** is reserved to describe the system of ideas and images that

LaVerne A. Rutschman serves with General Conference Mennonite Church Commission on Overseas Mission (COM). He is on the faculty of Seminario Bíblico Latinoamericano, San José, Costa Rica.

foments change (James E. Will, 1978). Others, perhaps the majority, use the word ideology to describe both levels. For them, ideology in its negative function favors the preservation of the status quo while positively it is utopian and promotes change. In this paper ideology is given this broader meaning.

Louis Althusser has defined ideology as "a system of representations (images, myths, ideas, and concepts) that possesses its own logic and rigor with its own existence and historical place in a given society" (1967:191). For Paul Tillich it is "the unconscious production of ideas that justify the will-to-power of a ruling group" (1972:481-82). For André Dumas it is "a social system, a totality formed by both ends and means whose strength is so great that even those who oppose it are obligated to use its language" (1970:28).

Negatively, then, ideology functions in a way that preserves the existing order (Enrique Dussel, 1979:160-94). It legitimates oppression and conceals reality. This is especially serious because it is largely unconscious, collectively so. Positively, interpreted in the utopian sense, ideology promotes change as it grips the imagination and motivates select groups toward revolution.

No nation can long maintain its integrity without an ideology that gives it coherence. Too often, of course, this is conservative and favors the dominant forces that control both the production of goods and of ideas. No ideology is permanent. An authentic faith demands that every ideology be submitted to judgment. This may lead to reform or to displacement in favor of a more relevant system. This process is described by some liberation theologians as an act of deideologization which must be followed by reideologization (Victorio Araya Guillén). Ideologies are inescapable. Even faith is expressed ideologically. However, faith, in itself, transcends any system of ideas. Were this not true there would be no place for the community of believers across ideological boundaries. Nevertheless, as Dumas has observed, we cannot leave our ideologies at the door of the temple when we enter to worship (1970:25). Even in worship we are more comfortable with those with whom we share basic postulates.

In the Parable of the Pharisee and the Tax Collector, the obscuring and idolatrous nature of ideology is evident. Authentic worship was impossible for the Pharisee. He did not know the God who "brings low the haughty looks of man" (Isa 2:11). Ideologies, now as then, under the judgment of the Word are exposed and purified or replaced in order that worship and discipleship may remain free.

Although ideologies are necessary and faith cannot be expressed without them, they require vigilance. As powerful symbols they can easily be converted into idols (*ibid.*:31). No one escapes this temptation, and few avoid this level of idolatry because God is usually perceived through the lens of ideological loyalty. Instead of providing tools for a meaningful expression of faith, they become ends in themselves and displace the God of the biblical revelation.

Marxism is an ideology, probably the most powerful of our time (*ibid.*:35-46). For millions it is also an idol. As an ideological symbol it may be useful, a revolutionary model for justice. As an idol it conceals reality, having been converted into a rigid political system that threatens humanity. Capitalism is also an ideology. As an idol it also obscures

reality while enjoying the legitimating support of great segments of the church. Its threat to human survival is equally serious.

There are many levels of ideology, but its most obvious expression is political. Few escape participation in the ideological political struggle today. Liberation Theology in its option for the poor is an instrument in this struggle. In political ideology it is socialistic. It interacts in critical involvement with Marxism. Marxism has given Liberation Theology the tools for a scientific evaluation of the capitalistic system that has maintained Latin America in permanent cultural, economic, and political dependence. Marxism also provides a strategy for action in which Christians and communists become allies in opposition to foreign oppressive capitalists and the national oligarchies with which they are in partnership.

As far as a dialogical confrontation with the all-embracing Marxist ideology is concerned, most liberation theologians have chosen to wait because of the urgent need to achieve a strategic alliance with Marxists in the present struggle between the rich and the poor. Some believe that the dialogue has been transcended because Latin Americans are free to pursue their own road to socialism, a social system in which will be a place for ideological coexistence. Fidel Castro, for example, shows little interest in what he calls

June 1981
Volume 9 Number 2

MISSION FOCUS



- 21 Latin American Liberation Theology from
an Anabaptist Perspective
LaVerne A. Rutschman
- 26 Patterns of Leadership in Urban Exile
Leland Harder
- 31 Chronicle
- 33 In review
- 44 Editorial

EDITORIAL COUNCIL

Editor Wilbert R. Shenk

Managing editor Willard E. Roth

Review editors Adolf Ens, Peter M. Hamm

Other member Robert L. Ramseyer

Editorial assistants Rebecca E. Miller, Merlin Becker-Hoover

MISSION FOCUS (ISSN 0164-4696) is published quarterly by Mennonite Board of Missions, 500 South Main, Elkhart, Indiana. Single copies available without charge. Send correspondence to Box 370, Elkhart, IN 46515. Second-class postage paid at Elkhart, IN 46515. Lithographed in USA. Copyright 1981 by Mennonite Board of Missions. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to MISSION FOCUS, Box 370, Elkhart, IN 46515.

the philosophical level of Marxist-Leninist thought (José Míguez Bonino, 1976:17). Few liberation theologians in Latin America today seem to be concerned about future barriers to ideological coexistence with Marxists. They know that socialism cannot be established in Latin America, the only extensive area of the Third World that is traditionally Christian, without the cooperation of Christians.

Religion and society

Closely related to the problem of the relation between ideology and faith, which in its Latin American development can be so disturbing to North Americans, is the question of the role of religion in society (Christian Lalive D'Espinay, 1973). Ideologies give coherence to a society, especially as they are expressed with religious sanctions. Religion in this role legitimates the dominant political ideology. The USA, for example, has been religiously pluralistic from its beginning. However, the so-called civil religion has provided the glue that has held the nation together ideologically. Recently, this cohesive force has lost much of its power because of Vietnam and Watergate (Will:41). The need today is to work for the restoration of this civil religion consensus within the pluralistic framework or to discover a surrogate that will bolster the dominant ideology. No nation can maintain its unity without some undergirding ideology that provides meaning for its existence and orientation for its people. Patriotism must have an ideological base.

Traditionally religion has played a conformist legitimating role in all societies. This is negative only if the structures of these societies do not assure justice in human relations. Christianity assumed this legitimating function in the early fourth century. This Christendom pattern continued in Latin America until Vatican II, although the struggle against it began shortly after the wars of independence in the nineteenth century. A religious system or a church does not necessarily have to be established, that is to enjoy a favored relationship with the state, in order to fulfill this function. Even without establishment the churches in the USA under pluralism have usually been conformist and legitimating. Many Christians continue to identify the American way with the fruit of the gospel. The recent turn to the right suggests that many conservative believers seek to legitimate the capitalistic system by turning back the pages of history.

There are, however, periods in which the dynamic voices within a religious system are expressed prophetically and call for a change. This demand may not require a structural break. Usually it does not. But it does seek greater justice and a more authentic expression of faith within the system. This is described as a protest from within. It seeks reform within the established structures. The long history of the church provides many examples of movements toward internal reform.

Religion can also make vocal the protest from without. It can demand structural revolutionary change. It is here that sixteenth-century Anabaptism and Liberation Theology converge. For both radical Anabaptists and liberationists, conformism today in its legitimating role is a denial of the gospel. It is too late for mere reformist efforts. Biblical faith demands systemic change, a revolution.

There are still others, uncomfortable with conformity as well as with reform efforts and revolutionary activity, who

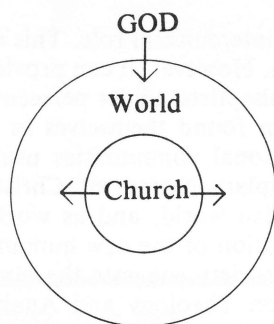
find religious support for a countercultural role. This may be nothing more than escapism. However, it can provide a nucleus for a new society. Anabaptists, under persecution or in silent protest, have often found themselves in this role. Modern Christian intentional communities usually function in this way as exemplary centers of Christian testimony and service in a fallen world, and as workers together with God in the formation of the new humanity.

The relation of religion to society suggests the closest convergence between Liberation Theology and Anabaptism and, at the same time, the maximum divergence. Sixteenth-century Anabaptism was revolutionary. It was not a reformist effort. The term Radical Reformation does not faithfully describe the genius of Anabaptism. The protest was from outside the traditional structures. For some it led to participation in the Peasants' War under Thomas Müntzer who saw no contradiction between his political ideological commitment to the poor and his dedication to Christ. The nonviolent Anabaptists, although in diametric disagreement with Müntzer's use of the sword, also expressed their faith in a way that was political in its effect. Their ideological expression of the faith was a mortal threat to the medieval order. They were persecuted because of the political dangers that their message and lifestyle carried for the existing order. Brutal persecution was justified in order to avoid chaos (Walter Klaassen, 1973:10, 62).

Liberation theologians acknowledge great admiration for the revolt of the peasants under the charismatic Anabaptist Thomas Müntzer. Although there is disagreement about the coherence of Müntzer's theology and his actions, his Christian convictions were expressed in complete involvement with the exploited as they sought liberation. According to Christian Lalive D'Espinay (1973:47-62), modern Latin American charismatic and pietistic Christians who take an apolitical quietistic stance do so because of missionary influence. Passivism is not a biblical response to injustice. North American and European missionaries, according to Lalive D'Espinay, in loyalty to a liberal capitalistic political ideology, have interpreted Christian responsibility toward society as basically spiritual.

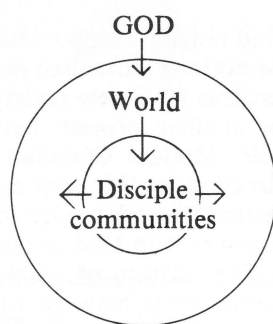
Liberationist Christians in Latin America are working to raise the consciousness of believers and nonbelievers alike toward political involvement. They appeal to the Old Testament Exodus paradigm. Radical Anabaptists insist that this model cannot be separated from the Abrahamic call and the Isaianic Servant Songs. God has chosen a special people as agents of liberation. These Abrahamic Servant communities are God's instruments for revolutionary change (John H. Yoder, 1971:27-33). These communities practice sacrificial discipleship and radical nonviolence. Their pacifism is not passive. Through their suffering they become redemptive. Through their exemplary testimony they are evangelistic.

Liberation theologians contend that God works primarily in the world and that Christians must work with non-Christians toward liberation. This involves the use of worldly methods and instruments. It does not preclude violence and may, if conditions demand it, promote it. This contrasts sharply with the Anabaptist priority on the nonviolent messianic community of disciples as agents of liberation. Because the end is always involved in the means, violence is ruled out. Unjust means cannot achieve just ends. Discipleship provides a better model.



Liberation Theology

God works directly in the world for human liberation. Christians enjoy no special privileges in their involvement with the world in his name.



Anabaptism

Although God is at work in the world, the church, made up of disciple-believers who live in this age while participating in the age to come, has a special responsibility toward human liberation in continuity with the biblical trajectory beginning with the call of Abraham.

The hermeneutical circle

The third frame of reference that helps us to understand how liberation theologians do theology and how Anabaptists may interact with them is the well-known hermeneutical circle as described by Juan Luis Segundo of Uruguay (1975:11-45). The following diagram shows its normal sequence through a series of suspicions to a new hermeneutic and a reaffirmation of the faith.

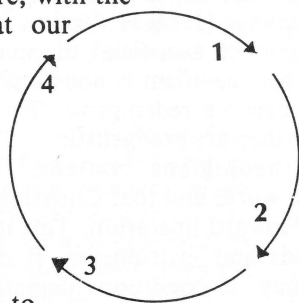
The Hermeneutical Circle from Juan Luis Segundo

The successful completion of this circle presupposes two conditions:

1. "The questions that emerge from the present situation are so rich, general and basic that they obligate us to change our usual concept of life, death knowledge of society, politics and the world in general."
2. "If theology reaches the point at which it is supposed that it is capable of responding to the new questions without changing its accustomed interpretation of the Scriptures, there the circle will end."

"Our new hermeneutic, that is, the new way to interpret the fountain of our faith, which is Scripture, with the new elements at our disposition."

"A new way of experiencing theological reality leads us to the exegetical suspicion, that is, the suspicion that current biblical interpretation does not take important data into account."



"Our way of experiencing reality leads us to the ideological suspicion."

"The application of the ideological suspicion to the entire ideological superstructure in general and to theology in particular."

Segundo describes how key thinkers such as Cox, Marx, and Weber began the circle but, upon reaching a certain level of suspicion, interrupted it without pressing on to the new hermeneutic and the reaffirmation of their faith. As I read their books and articles, listen to their conversations, and observe their way of life, I doubt that all liberation thinkers and activists have completed the circle. The same uncertainty can be expressed toward many radical Anabaptists. However, the circle demands patience. It is not completed in a day, nor is it necessarily a once-for-all experience. In our rapidly changing world, conditions for the contextualization of the gospel may demand more than one movement through the cycle.

Projected to the sixteenth century, it is helpful to interpret the religious leaders of the period with reference to this circle. The great Protestant reformers provided new religious legitimation for reformed structures. They did not need to pursue the circle. Reformers work within the system. Applied to the radical Anabaptists, the circle is revealing although the sequence of steps is different. In every case, it seems to me, the first level of suspicion for the Anabaptists related to exegesis as they reread the Bible. It was the Word of God that contextualized them, making them aware of the oppressive ideology that concealed the true nature of the good news in its social and religious relevance. In biblical categories they then expressed their suspicion of the dominant ideological and theological structures that maintained the existing order. They arrived at a new hermeneutic and a reaffirmation of their faith.

This cyclical sequence, beginning with the rereading of the Bible, is visible in the group of young men of Zürich who broke with Zwingli, in Pilgrim Marpeck as his Bible studies led him to a different concept of the Christian community, and in Menno Simons as he began to doubt certain Roman Catholic practices. It is, no doubt, even more graphically portrayed in revolutionary Anabaptists such as Thomas Müntzer.

I see the hermeneutical circle as an important tool in helping Latin American Christians maintain their faith as they seek structural change. In truth, it shows that Christianity, expressed ideologically, demands this series of suspicions if one is to confess a relevant faith in a world of oppression and poverty. Too often the faith is expressed in a way that allows the dominant ideology to function as an idol and conceal the revolutionary nature of Christian discipleship.

Within this circle the important segment points to the re-reading of Scripture demanded by the exegetical suspicion. To reread the Bible means to reinterpret it in a new context. This points to a constant movement between text and context, Word and situation. This is not a new discovery. The entire trajectory of biblical history shows the same tendency as the promises are reactualized and re-presented in each changing situation. Moses re-presents or contextualizes the Torah in the Book of Deuteronomy. The prophets reinterpret the tradition in their own situation. It is the false prophet who opposes contextualization. Isaiah talks about a new Exodus and a new creation. Jeremiah and Ezekiel anticipate the new wineskins, its continuity with and correction of the old. The paradigms are old. The content changes through the continual prophetic reinterpretation guided by the Spirit. The canonical shaping of Scripture also precludes confining its meaning to the original context (Brevard S. Childs, 1979:77-79).

This does not mean that we can overlook the original meaning. Liberation theologians argue, however, that the original meaning cannot be transferred intact to a new situation. The original meaning was not final. There can, in truth, be no final meaning. The living Word through the living Spirit speaks anew in each changing situation. The text as living has its own life as it follows the course of history. Like a storm cloud moving across the heavens, it can change both intensity and course. To limit its meaning to the past is to compel the dead prophet to destroy the living one. The meaning of the text, like the force of the storm, is at its front and not behind it. The rereading of the Scriptures also involves a rereading of the situation (John Stam:1980).

This two-way traffic between the situation and the Word, the context and the text, leads to the question of authority. Some liberation theologians, especially visible in Hugo Assmann, seem to find their primary authority in the rereading of the context supported, perhaps, by a rereading of the text. Assmann goes so far as to say that "the 'text' is our situation," the primary reference point. Other reference points such as "the Bible, the tradition, the teaching authority of the church, doctrine and history do not provide a reference point of truth in themselves without connection with the historical 'now' of the praxis-truth" (1973:97). Although this seems to me to be a bold statement and unnecessarily extreme, it does remind us that no one reads the Bible in an ideological vacuum. If we want God's Word to speak to us today, it must be within our context. To understand this context demands the use of the tools that the social sciences provide.

The responsibility: to provide biblical orientation for an authentic evangelically liberating theology

As a North American missionary in Latin America and as a Mennonite, I have been deeply affected by Liberation Theology. It has often made me uncomfortable, but it has never left me unstimulated. This encounter with Liberation Theology raises two pertinent questions. What is the impact of Liberation Theology on missions? How can we as Mennonites relate creatively to this new way of doing theology within the boundaries of the Anabaptist vision?

Looking back upon missionary activity in Latin America since 1947 in four different countries in the light of Liberation Theology, I am made aware of many serious mistakes. Liberation theologians might well direct the following accusations against us as Protestant missionaries in our traditional role:

1. "You have confessed solidarity with the oppressed, but you have not really taken 'an option for the poor' because you have not been actively engaged in the struggle for their liberation. You have approached the problem paternalistically with charitable actions, mere palliatives." I admit the charge. Where poverty is common, it is easy to become accustomed if not impervious to it all. It is comfortable to soothe the conscience through charitable acts. It is true, however, that there can be no authentic Christian community without a deeper level of sharing, nor can there be an effective commitment to the poor without joining them in their political struggle.

2. "You have proclaimed an apolitical gospel that has made you conscious or unconscious participants in the promotion of an oppressive ideology that has served the commercial and cultural interests of your own nations." This may be true, for there can be no apolitical presen-

tation of the gospel because there is no area of life to which it does not pertain. As we announce the kingdom of God and pray that it may come to earth, we act politically.

3. "You have insisted upon an unbiblical separation of the body and spirit, limiting the impact of the gospel to the spiritual level in a way that conceals the ideological forces directed toward the preservation of the existing unjust order." In this, too, we are guilty. How easy and comfortable it is to spiritualize the gospel and how difficult it is to capture the full scriptural meaning of a responsible world-affirming spirituality of the way!

4. "You have interpreted the Bible according to your own culture in a way that reflects the dominating ideologies that have kept Latin America dependent. You have not understood that God's Word must speak to us in our own unique situation." Unfortunately, this is also true. It is not easy to reread the Bible in the context of another culture and tradition. As we now pursue the hermeneutical circle, many former convictions—really idols—are destroyed in order that God's Word may speak in a new situation.

In response to the second question, which asks how we as Mennonites can relate to Liberation Theology within the scope of the Anabaptist vision, only a few guidelines can be suggested. There are, as we have seen, fundamental areas of agreement. Our goals are not unlike. We often differ about methods. Anabaptists see the servant community as God's primary instrument in changing unjust structures. We may differ about the authority of an analysis of the situation and about responsibility for history. As Anabaptists we do not place our confidence in ideologies of either the right or the left, both of which participate in the Fall, although we do not claim to live in an ideological vacuum. We declare our solidarity with liberation theologians in the option for the poor, the rereading of the Word in the hermeneutical circle, the conviction that the Christian faith must be reaffirmed in a way that breaks with an interpretation that serves the forces of oppression, and the vision of the kingdom of God in which "the poor will inherit the earth."

Liberation Theology reminds us to be true to our heritage, not by keeping it intact but by transforming it in the situation in which God places us as his witnesses. We must respond to the Theology of Liberation summons for commitment to the poor by forming servant communities where the gospel is lived and proclaimed, where mutual aid and the simple life are more than slogans, and where our love for Christ—present in the hungry, the thirsty, the stranger, the naked, the sick, and the prisoner—is demonstrated by liberating actions that eschew all personal security based upon the unjust structures of modern society. Anabaptists have a unique responsibility to provide biblical orientation for an authentic evangelically liberating theology for Latin America and the world.

References cited

- Althusser, Louis
1967 *La revolución teórica de Marx* Mexico-Buenos Aires: Siglo XXI. My translation.
- Assmann, Hugo
1973 *Teología desde la praxis de la liberación* Salamanca: Ediciones Sígueme. My translation. In English, *Theology for a Nomad Church* Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1976.

Bonino, José Miquez
1976 *Christians and Marxists* Grand Rapids: Eerdmans

Childs, Brevard S.
1979 *Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture*
Philadelphia: Fortress Press

D'Espinay, Christian Lalive
1973 *Religión e ideología en una perspectiva sociológica*
Río Piedras, Puerto Rico: Seminario Evangélico

Dumas, André
1970 *Ideología y fe* Montevideo: Tierra Nueva. My translation.

Dussel, Enrique
1979 "Sobre la historia de la teología en América Latina,"
Lectura teológica del tiempo latinoamericano San José:
Seminario Bíblico Latinoamericano. Dussel deals with
ideology only in its negative legitimating and concealing
roles.

Guillén, Victorio Araya
Dean of the Latin American Biblical Seminary. He
emphasizes that reideologization follows deideologization
as part of his own experience.

Klaassen, Walter
1973 *Anabaptism: Neither Catholic nor Protestant*
Waterloo, Ontario: Conrad Press

Rutschman, LaVerne A.
1980 A paper prepared for the *Symposium on Anabaptism
and East European Expressions of Marxism* sponsored by

Mennonite Central Committee Peace Section and the
Institute of Mennonite Studies in Elkhart, Indiana,
November 24-26, 1980. It is to be published in the July
1981 issue of *The Mennonite Quarterly Review*, Goshen,
Indiana.

Segundo, Juan Luis
1975 *Liberación de la teología* Buenos Aires-Mexico:
Ediciones Carlos Lohle. My translation.

Stam, John
1980 Formerly a member of the San José Seminary faculty,
Stam has developed the theme of rereading both Scripture
and situations in a mimeographed study, "The
Hermeneutics of Liberation Theology," prepared for
seminary students in Bangalore, India, during a short
assignment there in 1980. This reflects the work of
Severino Croatto and Beatriz Melano de Couch of
Buenos Aires in their interpretation of the writings
of Paul Ricoeur.

Tillich, Paul
1972 *A History of Christian Thought* New York:
Simon and Schuster

Will, James E.
1978 "The Place of Ideology in Theology," in *Varieties of
Christian-Marxist Dialogue*, edited by Paul
Mojzes, Philadelphia: The Ecumenical Press

Yoder, John H.
1971 *The Original Revolution* Scottdale, Pennsylvania:
Herald Press

Patterns of Leadership in Urban Exile

LELAND HARDER

The following reflections about a three-year ministry in St. Louis, Missouri, were first presented to the Pastors' Workshop at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries, Elkhart, Indiana, January 1981 on the theme, *The Church Prepares for Exile*. The topic assigned to me was "Patterns of Leadership beyond Congregations." Because I wanted to submit a rather personal account of our experiences in St. Louis, I simply added words, "beyond Congregations in Inman, Henderson, Mountain Lake, Herbert, Kalona, Morton, Berne, Archbold, and Quakertown." These are some of the rural communities in Kansas, Nebraska, Minnesota, Saskatchewan, Iowa, Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, and Pennsylvania from where Mennonite people in St. Louis come. They came to St. Louis for the same reason that many of our grandparents came to North America—looking for economic opportunity. This is voluntary exile, distinct from other kinds of involuntary captivity.

At an Indianapolis Conference on the Suburban Mennonite Church, James Dunn, then pastor of the First Mennonite Church of Champaign-Urbana (Illinois), summarized some of the questions we have been facing: (1) Has God really called us to the city? (2) Is the city really a place where Mennonites wage their moral battles with the powers and principalities of this fallen world? (3) If indeed most of us have gone to the city for employment, how do we become the Church of Jesus Christ in that environment?

During discussion of these issues, someone made the distinction between incidental and intentional churches. An intentional church was allegedly composed of people

Leland Harder, professor at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries, Elkhart, Indiana, is on leave and is serving with the St. Louis (Missouri) Mennonite Fellowship.

for whom the church had always been their first priority over job, place of residence, associates, and lifestyle. In the other type, the church was supposedly secondary to these things. This was not a helpful distinction to many of us because it was contrary to our experience, tending to ignore if not decry the sociological givens of human existence.

The evolution of St. Louis Mennonite Fellowship

The Fellowship in St. Louis is neither an intentional nor an incidental church in the way those terms were defined. If the Fellowship was only incidental to our jobs or places of residence, I doubt whether we would still be gathering two or three times a week. But neither can it be said that any of us moved to St. Louis primarily to be a part of a Mennonite Church in that metropolis.

Perhaps **serendipity** would better characterize the story we have to tell—the surprise of finding a treasure in an unexpected place by the sheer grace of God, except that even surprise stories can have applications of principle and practice. Certainly there are many North American cities where Mennonites have moved, but where they have not found each other or gathered into fellowships.

This was the case in St. Louis for many decades during which numerous Mennonites lived and worked and attended school without gathering for worship. A year of serendipity was 1972, when Barry Hieb was completing a residency in surgery and Fern Hieb was completing a graduate degree in organ performance and literature. Something vaguely related to the Christian nurture they had received in Freeman, South Dakota, and Henderson, Nebraska, respectively, and at Newton, Kansas, where they attended Bethel College, promoted them to make a bold decision to form a Voluntary Service unit. They supported it by their own earnings—Barry as a staff physician at City Hospital and Fern as a piano teacher. They were joined by two women VSers who lived at the Bethesda Mennonite Church where Hubert Schwartzentruber was the pastor of an inner city church.

Although this first VS unit was aborted for reasons beyond the control of the Hiebs, one of its spinoffs was the compiling of a list of people with Mennonite background living in the metropolitan area to see whether a local VS support group could be mobilized. There had been occasional social gatherings of Mennonites, but this was a more serious survey of interest in regular meetings for the sake of sponsoring four people with a special sense of mission.

The first such focused meeting was held at the Hieb residence in 1972 with about ten people present. The group decided to meet monthly to discuss a book of the month; two of their earlier selections were serendipitous—Harold S. Bender's *The Anabaptist Vision* and John H. Yoder's *The Politics of Jesus*. These writings helped give the group a sense of identity and some assurance that the goal of forming a second Mennonite congregation in St. Louis was worth exploring, not just for the sake of themselves and their children but also as a witness to the people among whom they lived and worked.

Participants in the group almost from the start were Leo and Mary Kay Kreider who arrived in March 1973. The Kreiders had completed graduate school in Chicago and secured their present positions as president of a suburban bank and department head in a community

college. Although they lived further out of the city, their Mennonite Church identity was meaningful. They readily joined the group, which often met at their apartment complex.

The high mobility of participants caused considerable uncertainty about the wisdom of forming a church, which was the recurrent topic of conversation for several years. This discussion was encouraged by church conference officials such as Stan Bohn, then Central District Conference pastor, and David Whitemore, Church Planting Consultant of the General Conference Mennonite Church, both of whom came for a visit.

The local group worked on a statement of purpose and faith, with particular reference to the historic peace position. This was a turning point in their search for direction. "Our purpose," they said, "is to discern and to follow Christ's teachings in our present situations. We will meet for worship, discussion, fellowship, and service. Leadership responsibility will be shared by group members and we will affiliate with several Mennonite Church Conferences." The statement was signed, "The St. Louis Mennonite Fellowship, February, 1975."

For two more years they met monthly without a sense of having actually formed a church. Some attended other churches on Sunday morning; Barry Hieb had even been ordained a lay elder in the Presbyterian Church where Fern was organist and choir director. The group finally decided to meet early on Sunday morning; this was directly related to a decision to sponsor another VS unit. They knew that if they were going to give the support needed by young VSers, they had to meet weekly. This was in the summer of 1977, following another visit by David Whitemore and discussion about how many people were required to make a church. David suggested four families; the story is that Barry looked around and said, "Yeah, we might be able to find four families!"

Five new VSers and two Mennonite Central Committee trainees arrived and began their work at Edgewood Children's Center, a school for children with learning disabilities. The group has met at the school since then. A few people began to express a need for a pastor. This was discussed for many months. It was another difficult decision because everyone realized that financially they could not support a pastor. Moreover, there were strong feelings in favor of continuing to share leadership responsibility, and in opposition to the customary way of receiving pastoral support subsidies from the conference.

The resolution of the problem dovetailed with God's answer to the search by my wife Bertha and me for a way to use an extended sabbatical leave for a congregational ministry combined with other church-related assignments, research, and writing. With housing arranged by the Fellowship and our sabbatical support from Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries, Elkhart, Indiana, we arrived in August 1978. Several new VSers and a couple of newly married university graduates who were beginning jobs as data processor and elementary school teacher came at the same time.

Since then we have worked together with the usual ups and downs that every small urban fellowship must experience. We are sensing the leading of the Holy Spirit in the continuing of shared ministry, the planning of weekly worship, the development of a Sunday school, the mid-week Bible study and prayer meetings, the semiannual weekend retreats, the teaching of a number of new-member classes, and the inevitable farewell parties for

those who have moved away—including Paul and Suzanne Ford, whom we commissioned for MCC service in Sudan.

Charismatic organization and leadership

We have what Max Weber called a charismatic basis of organization and leadership. I'm speaking sociologically rather than theologically, although I strongly suspect that he borrowed the term from the New Testament word **charisma**, meaning grace-gift, or as Howard Charles has translated it, service-ability. As the apostle put it in Romans 12:6, "Having gifts that differ according to the grace given us, let us use them: if **prophecy**, in proportion to our faith; if **service**, in our serving; he who **teaches**, in his teaching; he who **exhorts**, in his exhortation; he who **contributes**, in liberality; he who **gives aid**, with zeal; he who **does acts of mercy**, with cheerfulness" (emphasis mine). Whether members of our Fellowship have charisma depends not on whether any of us have dynamic personalities, but on whether we are participating in a common sense of mission, allowing all of our abilities to be used for the sake of that mission.

What makes us a charismatic church is not that all of us—or any of us for that matter—pray in tongues, but the way we shape our lives for ministry. According to Max Weber, people shape themselves into groups one of three basic ways. There is the **traditional** type of organization in which the right of one person to lead another is defined by precedents from the past. The male bishop or pastor is set apart, perhaps by lot, and possesses an indelible authority for life. The main criteria for his ordination are his piety, his identification with the group's cultural heritage, and his charge to perpetuate the group's rites and patterns of dress, farming, food, and worship. Members of the Mennonite Church have been predominantly traditional in their authority structure, although this is changing rapidly.

The second form of organization is **constitutional**, which has been the predominant basis of organization in the General Conference Mennonite Church. Reacting against the traditionalism of the Mennonite Church, the General Conference churches wrote constitutions so that everything could be done decently and in order. Job descriptions were written for pastors and other congregational leaders, who were usually chosen by majority vote and served for specified terms of service (rather than for life) with a specified salary for the pastor and a specified age for retirement. Weber described this as a rational or legal form of authority.

A **charismatic** basis of organization is quite different. It involves a voluntary group whose primary purpose is described in Romans 12:2—the transformation of our lives by the renewing of our minds, that we may prove what is the will of God and what is good and acceptable. In a charismatic type fellowship, the right of one person to lead another is warranted only by the gift of grace within. A charismatic role in the fellowship is not a constitutional office or a traditional position but a sacrificial service (Rom 12:1). It is not a matter of traditional ordination or contractual employment but a mandate that has come from the Lord to the group and to its leader-to-be, simultaneously, with the Lord's admonition that a worker is worthy of his or her keep. Tenure is not a matter of constitutional rules or traditional performance but of the durability of the gift of grace within, tempered by the counsel of the group, the spirit of forgiveness for failures, and the weekly renewal of one's spiritual gifts. When

evidence of charismatic qualification declines, a member's authority to lead is passed to someone else; for in a truly charismatic congregation, leadership and authority are always shared. Each person is given a service-ability to be exercised in the ongoing life of the fellowship.

This does not mean that a charismatic congregation must operate without traditions or written expectations. It doesn't necessarily function without leaders, one or two of whom serve as pastor according to Ephesians 4:11. It doesn't mean that pastors should not have seminary training or be ordained or paid a salary. My role as pastor of the St. Louis Mennonite Fellowship fits neither traditional nor constitutional patterns. I am not expected to be the holy man of God, representing God's will to the congregation in every worship service. I am not expected to lead every service or to preach every sermon. I have no written job description; my ministry varies from week to week. Only in retrospect am I beginning to see how patterns of leadership have emerged, and how I have been able within specific situations to fulfill certain roles in relation to the participation of others.

Pastoral responsibilities

One need that I was able to fulfill was to equip the saints for their ministries, to use the terminology of Ephesians 4:12. Another was to distinguish between spirits, to use the wording of 1 Corinthians 12:10. Another was the role of boundary maintenance, to borrow a concept from sociology. A fourth was to hold members accountable, or rather, to help individuals to be faithful. Keeping in mind Paul's admonition "not to think of oneself more highly than one ought to think" (Rom 12:3), I shall describe each of these roles in the context of our St. Louis experience. I am assuming that the pattern of leadership that emerged in this city may be relevant to small urban Mennonite fellowships elsewhere.

To equip the saints for their ministries

An ad hoc worship committee meets occasionally to do three or four months of advance rough scheduling. As the keeper of the calendar, I coordinate month-by-month preaching assignments; another member appoints the Sunday worship leaders. To avoid haphazard preparation, I wrote some guidelines for worship leadership and began the use of printed bulletins containing the order of worship. Freedom in worship comes within a planned order which usually provides space for spontaneous sharing of concerns, announcements, testimonies, and prayers.

At first I regularly preached once or twice a month, supplemented by guest speakers and an occasional sermon from another Fellowship member. Several months ago I sent a memo to about a dozen members (men and women) who had the service-ability to preach the gospel, inviting each of them to preach a sermon in a series on the Gospel of Matthew which paralleled the adult Sunday school lessons during the first and second quarters of 1981. They readily consented. We meet as a separate Sunday school class to explore the nature and method of biblical preaching, devoting part of the hour to structured feedback for the person who preached last. The other part of the hour is used to equip the person next in line to preach. The denomination's Sunday school materials provide a minimal exposition of the text, supplemented by books and articles from my library. We have done one series and plan to schedule another round for the quarter following Bertha's and my departure.

As Franklin Littell observes, we have not abolished the concept of the clergy (persons set apart to preach) but have rejected the idea of the uninvolved laity which Christendom numbers in the millions. To make the priesthood of believers functional, they need to be properly equipped for their ministries. As the seminaries in Elkhart, the curricular word for this is **supervision** or SEM—supervised experience in ministry.

To distinguish among spirits

A second pastoral role we needed in St. Louis was to distinguish among spirits. Like other urbanized people, Mennonites who come to the city can be “tossed to and fro and carried about by various winds of doctrine” (Eph 4:14). The group in St. Louis had to deal with several winds of doctrine before their own theological identity could be defined. Without going into detail, I’ll label four of these as militarism, spiritualism, fundamentalism, and liberalism and describe the first two as we experienced them.

Several people who attended our meetings shared some piece of Mennonite history and enjoyed playing the Mennonite game (discovering genealogical relationships). They, however, opposed our taking a corporate stand against militarism and the idea of just wars. Their first question—often asked—was, “What would you do if an assailant broke into your house to rape your wife?” The assumption was that if you would resist him by force, it’s permissible for nations to resist aggression by force; and if it’s permissible for nations to use force, it’s untenable for Christians to witness against it.

This kind of debate can be especially difficult in a small fellowship that wants to grow in numbers by being accepting and inclusive of varying points of view. As a Mennonite sociologist, I am aware of a strong inverse correlation between church growth and peace witness. Mennonite congregations most anxious about church growth tend to be congregations least interested in the historic peace ethic. In no way does this statistical phenomenon invalidate the concept of peace evangelism, but we have to define our commitments clearly in order to make this operational according to the life and teachings of Jesus. This was made easier in St. Louis because the core group was quite clear about their basic peace position before Bertha and I arrived. They needed mostly to be confirmed in their stand and to have someone help them set limits for newcomers who wanted to play down the peace position and not make it a test of membership.

In the process of preparing several persons for membership, I listened to their reservations, reiterated our readiness to receive them into membership on profession of faith in Christ; but I added that in their continuing search for God’s word on this question in our Fellowship, they would not be free to strive against our historic peace position as long as they were members. This resolution of the matter seemed good to them and to us, and we received them with gladness. To help us all develop a deeper grasp of our witness in this area and to reinforce our stand, I have felt it essential to preach explicitly on the gospel of peace and on peacemaking several times each year.

The other wind of doctrine on which I will comment is that of spiritualism, promoted by several persons with Mennonite background and strong powers of persuasion. By spiritualism I mean a combination of beliefs and practices including meditation, psychic phenomena, communion with the deceased, the denial of death, reincarnation, and a preoccupation with this kind of data not unlike some of

the gnosticism in the early church. In certain respects, this is more difficult to deal with than militancy because these people proclaim their beliefs by frequent references to spiritualist terminology in the New Testament. Perhaps we could tolerate this spirit if it was not so vocal and potentially divisive in a small group such as ours.

Here again my role was to help the Fellowship test these doctrines by the norm of Scripture and to decide who gets access to our pulpit (although we have no pulpit in the architectural sense). Following an urgent request from several of our VSers who had been on the receiving end of this spiritual doctrine, I preached an Easter Sunday sermon entitled, “Though He Were Dead” based on John 11:25, and confronted the belief that undermines the miracle of the resurrection by denying the reality of death. As a consequence of this confrontation, our spiritualist members withdrew; I have wondered whether my approach was too directive. They still attend occasionally, and we continue to pray that they will return to sound biblical doctrine and join the Fellowship because we need their gifts. This is where they belong.

To maintain boundaries

Although some things could be said about the recurrent winds of fundamentalism and liberalism, I will move on to another facet of leadership in St. Louis. A third need that I was able to help to fulfill was to stand at the door of the sheepfold—to use the imagery of John 10—and help the group identify who really belongs to this sheepfold and who are only neighbors or auditors. In the language of sociology, this is called boundary maintenance. Until we wrote a covenant and began to use it as our practical basis for membership, there was considerable ambiguity as to who was accountable and who was not.

I am not talking about numbers primarily but about accountability. This is what Janet Yoder of the Spokane Mennonite Fellowship calls the Core versus the Fringe issue:

Because smallness is often frightening for people who are not completely comfortable with a house church, and because we have all been tainted by the notion that growth is the true mark of success, we expend a large proportion of our energy hunting down potential group members and avoiding any decisions or activities that might threaten or exclude anyone who is even marginally a participant in the fellowship. For some then, covenanting is dangerous because some who choose not to covenant might feel excluded—even though the choice to covenant is open to all and in no way limits attendance for any. Inherent in this over-emphasis on numbers is the neglect of the central life of the fellowship. . . . My years of struggle with a small church have taught me that unless the needs of the Core are met in such a way that they are strengthened and able to define their faith and vision clearly, there is really little to attract Fringe participants to draw closer (The House Church, 4:1, February 1981, p. 8).

The concept of a formal covenant may sound like a constitutional form of church order. Not necessarily. In the ancient Near Eastern world where the people of Israel found their promised land, covenants were a common means of regulating the life of the community so that some measure of trust and predictability could be introduced into the participation of its members. Sometimes the covenant expectations were informal; members were bound into the community by some ritual like a ceremonial meal. Sometimes the covenant was written more explicitly;

a formal pledge was the element that made it binding. There was always some form of ceremony, not only for its ratification but also for its periodic renewal. Of course, the element that made the covenants of Israel so special was the relationship they bound between the people and their God, whom they came to know as the universal deity.

The St. Louis Mennonite Fellowship had a first covenant signing service on June 3, 1979, with seventeen charter members. We have received nineteen additional members on five subsequent occasions and had our first covenant renewal service on Pentecost Sunday 1980. We are aware of the difficulties of living up to our covenant commitments and of the sober prophecy of Jeremiah that because of the disobedience of the ancient covenant community, the coming Messiah would put his law within the true believers and write it upon their hearts (Jer 31:31-35).

The self-identity of the early Christians as the new covenant people of God and the way Jesus and the apostles made the moral and ethical obligations of their new covenant explicit give meaning to our covenant. It is helpful to us in our covenant to say, "I commit myself to a personal and corporate study of the Bible as the trustworthy guide for our shared discipleship." We are patterning after the early Christians who confessed that "all Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, reproof, correction, and training in righteousness" (2 Tim 2:16). It is helpful to us in our covenant to say, "I commit myself to the practice of regular prayer to God in thanksgiving and intercession for others." We are following the early Christians who encouraged one another to "rejoice always (and) pray constantly, giving thanks in all circumstances" (1 Thess 5:16-18). It is helpful in our covenant to say, "I commit myself to regular worship in the fellowship of the church." We follow the early Christians who covenanted to meet often for prayer and fellowship. It is helpful to us to affix our signature to our printed covenant and thereby to agree to abide by its provisions and to review our commitments each year. We follow the early Christians who made their pledges explicit and encouraged each other to remain faithful.

I have said nothing about the incorporation of children into our fellowship. In a small urban fellowship with too few children to have closely graded Sunday school classes, Christian nurture requires a creative, intergenerational method. Currently Bertha leads a class composed of three adults, two high school youths, one junior high person, and two elementary school children.

While we were working on our statement of covenant, the junior-age children, under Bertha's leadership, decided to write their own covenant in the context of the Sunday school curriculum on Israel's exodus from Egypt and God's covenant with the people of Israel. When the adults ratified their covenant with each other and the Lord, the children also signed a covenant. Bertha explained that the children wrote what they have come to believe at this point in their lives, looking forward to the time when they will make an adult decision to join the church by baptism.

To maintain accountability and faithfulness

The fourth need that gave focus to my role in the Fellowship was to hold members accountable. I'm not referring here to church discipline in the usual sense, but rather to a positive kind of ministry which prompts people to act in obedience to their covenant commitments. This might be

called the role of catalyst, although I would prefer to think of it as simply helping the group to be faithful in action as well as in word. Similar to the other functions I have described, this is a shared ministry; I have at times, however, felt led to intervene to move the group from discussion to action, from impasse to a new direction.

An example. We arrived in St. Louis about the time refugees from Vietnam were getting into boats of all kinds in search for new homes. For weeks news of their desperate plight in the open seas came to us through the media, and for weeks we prayed for the rescue of these boat people. At one of our midweek Bible study and prayer meetings, the subject came up again. I sensed it was becoming more difficult simply to pray for them if we did not try to get involved in a more practical way. I voiced this as a sense of the meeting and moderated a quick process of decision-making to contact several refugee organizations, including MCC and the International Institute in St. Louis. The next day the medical student whom we had asked to make the contacts called to report that the Institute would like for us to sponsor a ten-member family from Hanoi who were already in St. Louis. We went to work to find a large house to rent, to prepare it for occupancy, to gather the furniture and appliances required, and to allocate the many tasks and funds needed to help one Cantonese family in all the adjustments to a new home. There was one of them for every three of us, and it took a lot of doing; but our spirits were moved for many weeks as we worked together on this special mission.

A similar process is now under way concerning our peace witness. Every month we attend the St. Louis chapter of New Call to Peacemaking, talking, talking, and talking about the human bent toward militarism and the stockpiling of armaments including the building of the Trident Missile Submarine by General Dynamics with its headquarters in our city. We formed several task forces to work on counter recruitment, war tax resistance, and draft counseling. We sent out a letter to every high school in the metropolitan area and got several requests, one to lead a seminar in a parochial high school on conscientious objection to war, and another for someone to do draft counseling in a public high school. We had a discernment process in our Fellowship which happened in our VS Support Committee meeting. The outcome was the drafting of a proposal for a full-time peace worker. This proposal was subsequently funded by a Peace and Social Justice grant from the General Conference Mennonite Church, Newton, Kansas. Now we are praying to the Lord of the harvest to send the right person into this harvest field to work with us as new doors open in this area of our mission.

In both of these instances, my role was mostly that of a guide, helping people find handles to implement their own sense of mission and purpose in this city. Now Bertha and I are preparing to return to Elkhart, trusting that the shared ministry which is so essential and functional in a small urban fellowship in exile from rural Mennonite strongholds will continue to be viable in St. Louis. As the search for our replacement proceeds, our final role is a standby ministry to reassure the Fellowship that the same Lord who has led us week by week will continue to answer their prayers. Others will join them "for the equipment of the saints, for the work of ministry, [and] for building up the body of Christ" in this archway city on the mighty Mississippi.

Chronicle

MENNONITE MISSIONARY STUDY FELLOWSHIP COUNCIL OF MENNONITE SEMINARIES

February 26-28, 1981, Elkhart, Indiana

**Theme: THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION
IN MISSION(S) PERSPECTIVE**

A bold proposal to "test the possibility of giving theological education a clear focus by making mission—i.e., the encounter between faith and unfaith—the touchstone" engaged the strong interest of a joint meeting of the Mennonite Missionary Study Fellowship and the Council of Mennonite Seminaries at Elkhart, Indiana, February 26-28, 1981.

In a multifaceted approach the group probed the implications of a definite shift in the organizing thrust of theological education. Reports from the deans of Mennonite Brethren Biblical Seminary, Fresno, California; Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries, Elkhart, Indiana; and Eastern Mennonite Seminary, Harrisonburg, Virginia, revealed various levels of integrating such perspective into present curricula.

While all could document substantial (potential?) orientation to mission within present programs, Mennonite Brethren Biblical Seminary has clearly advanced a unique effort to organize the entire theological endeavor towards mission. This seminary, on the basis of two decades of emerging identity and a decision in 1978 to focus the next two decades on mission to the world, has taken significant steps to organize the entire curriculum around this objective. AMBS incorporates a missions perspective into a peace studies curriculum, and EMS offers some special courses in missions. None have yet demonstrated how full orientation to mission(s) can carry the load of theological education.

Statements by missions administrators clarified the sense of need which apparently served as a catalyst for the theme of the conference. Howard Habegger, Executive Secretary of the Commission on Overseas Missions, General Conference Mennonite Church, Newton, Kansas, emphasized the theological centrality of mission in Scripture and observed the contrasting inward character of much current theological education. Wilbert Shenk, Vice President of Overseas Ministries, Mennonite Board of Missions, Elkhart, Indiana, outlined historically the functional and programmatic problems resulting from this lack of theological grounding in missions. Don Jacobs, Director, Christian Leadership Foundation, Landisville, Pennsylvania, pinpointed denominational concerns involved and called for continuing effort to conserve traditional community strength within an increasingly diverse ecumenical context. The concerns of the administrators clearly reinforced the sense of need for help from the seminaries in shaping the church for faithfulness in a complex task.

A paper, "Contextualization's Challenge to Theological Education," by Paul G. Hiebert, professor of Mission Anthropology at the School of World Missions, Fuller

Theological Seminary, Pasadena, California, highlighted the need for greater competence in missions, more by the discussion it elicited than by the theory presented. Hiebert's discussion of concepts, quite familiar in missiological literature, brought reactions of surprise, unfamiliarity, and confusion from this assembly of well-informed seminary professors, students, and church leaders. I concluded that the task of informing from and for mission in a real world remains very large.

These preparatory statements led to the main task of the conference—to explore the implications of a commitment to mission(s) for theological education. In a major synthesizing paper, David Bosch, Editor of *Missionalia*, Pretoria, South Africa, called for an approach which combines previously attempted solutions, unsuccessful *en solo*. Thus mission would become a dimension of all the disciplines, a distinct discipline for missionary tasks, and fill an ombuds' role to hold a rightful perspective and priority for mission(s) throughout the seminary curriculum. Contributory papers from representatives of the disciplines of biblical studies, theology, ethics, and church history and the ensuing discussion showed that such refocusing is possible and probably desirable if not always easy or unanimously accepted.

The following set of conclusions received general support from the group.

1. The Bible is a missionary document.
2. Church history is missionary history.
3. The task of theology is to contextualize the biblical message in diverse human cultures.
4. The church is a missionary people.
5. Ethics makes the gospel good news.
6. The faculty as missional role models is integral to the missional task of theological education.
7. Modeling and teaching clear communication is part of the training for mission.

In my judgment the conference addressed an urgent problem for the church in this particular historical moment. At a time when the world situation demands increasing participation in the *missio dei*, a certain malaise threatens the missionary dimension of the churches. I am encouraged both by the timeliness of this conference and the obvious commitment of major resources to an assessment. The quality of the discussion was intense and informed throughout.

Two problems for implementation of the vision I saw forming stand out. One regards motivation. Seminaries serve churches. Our contemporary society, including Mennonite churches, has veered sharply towards serving self-interests at the expense of opportunities for peace and justice. Sociologically all groups, including religious ones, tend toward maintenance more than mission. The leaders at this convocation may be ahead of popular demand. What happens if the seminaries move ahead? Can they exercise a leadership role strong enough to overcome a serving function? Servant leadership need not be subservient. But the task of the seminaries to move beyond the status quo in mission(s) will demand great effort to overcome the inertia of other more popular directions in ministry.

A second problem is methodology. Full commitment to this vision might well call for radical methodologies. I do not see any immediate reasons that a move in the direction of mission(s) should jeopardize the regular arrangements of residential schools, highly academic faculties, and fully accredited programs. But that will happen if reorientation towards mission(s) should demand a radical break from classical molds? Some have already suggested that the advanced school system of our culture is integrally part of an elitist society. Third World theologians teach us that theology must be done more at the crossroads than on the campus to achieve genuine response to human dilemmas. The itinerant pattern of Jesus' ministry may hold greater power as a model than the institutional church has been willing to recognize.

These two unresolved questions do not minimize my excitement with the potential of this consultation. Should the ongoing effort at refinement and implementation of the vision be commensurate with the intensity of this probing discussion, Elkhart 1981 could well become a landmark for a new era of faithfulness in the life of the church.

John M. Miller

John M. Miller teaches at Oral Roberts University School of Theology, Tulsa, Oklahoma.

In review

Mission Focus: Current Issues. Edited by Wilbert R. Shenk. Scottdale, Pennsylvania, and Kitchener, Ontario: Herald Press, 1980, 488 pp., \$11.95 (pb)

Reviewed by William J. Danker

If you're reading more in mission literature and enjoying it less, try this refreshing symposium. Wilbert R. Shenk, director of overseas missions at Mennonite Board of Missions, Elkhart, Indiana, has carefully gleaned articles for this collection from the first six volumes of a Mennonite publication targeted for mission leaders.

The authors are largely exponents of the believers free church tradition that remained independent of the church-government combines in the Protestant Reformation. This Mennonite volume maintains its independence of thought from today's large ecumenical, evangelical, and mainliner groupings of all kinds.

These Mennonites, however, are not so emphatic in their autarchy that they cannot learn from others. As a matter of fact, they are remarkably open as their inclusion of articles by noted mission and church historian R. Pierce Beaver, A. F. Walls of the University of Aberdeen, and Seventh-Day Adventist Gottfried Oosterwal demonstrates.

There is much to learn from Mennonites in this symposium's three sections: I. Bible and Theology; II. Mission and World; III. Strategy and Policy.

Mennonite exegetes and systematians have done their homework. From a rich section I lift out only one article—David A. Shank's essay on Christian conversion. Many a Lutheran mission leader is prone to become a Johnny One-Note in emphasizing justification. Shank provides long lists of many-splendored ways in which the New Testament speaks of the miracle of salvation and conversion. He extrapolates from this biblical variety to no fewer than eighteen different contemporary contexts, ranging from acceptance through festival, fulfillment, liberation, and **conscientization**. He suggests how conversion and Christ may be expressed through appropriate semantics and symbols in each context.

The *Mission Focus* symposium also shows that Mennonites can avoid pretensions of infallibility that at times mark homogenous groups. In a word, they can admit mistakes. They are in the vanguard of the historic peace churches in North America; therefore they fired no guns and dropped no bombs in Vietnam. Yet four essays examine, review, evaluate, and at times agonizingly reappraise the large Mennonite program of voluntary service in Vietnam, especially under the Mennonite Central Committee. Many of the sentiments are reformist. But one writer, James E. Metzler, says flatly in the title and body of his essay, "I Wouldn't Do It Again."

Since Mennonites admit their own mistakes, perhaps they won't mind my pointing out that pages nineteen through twenty-three are scrambled. But they haven't dropped the ball in this stimulating, well edited collection of essays on current issues in mission.

A whole rainbow of potential readers can profit—domestic and overseas mission workers, agency administrators and board members, congregational and denominational leaders, academics and interested lay persons. One can only hope that Mennonites will realize this book is too good to keep to themselves and find ways to share the volume with their counterparts in other denominations and ecclesiastical groupings.

William J. Danker helped establish the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod's mission to Japan following World War II. He is professor of missions at Christ Seminary (Seminex), St. Louis, Missouri.

Evangelicalism and Anabaptism. Edited by C. Norman Kraus. Scottdale, Pennsylvania: Herald Press, 1979, 187 pp., \$5.95 (pb)

Reviewed by Clark H. Pinnock

Evangelical Christianity is popular in North America and is affecting every traditional group including Anabaptists. It calls for a response especially in view of the fact that it is not a positive influence in every respect. Ron Sider, whose credentials in both sectors are impeccable and well known, has written a chapter in this book which indicates how the two movements might learn from each other. The editor's essay, on the other hand, would seem to be more impressed by what Anabaptism, as he defines it, has to offer.

The book is a collection of nine essays which introduce the reader, assumed to be Anabaptist, to the phenomenon of evangelicalism. It reviews characteristics well known to practically any reader, such as the inerrancy debate and the prophecy obsession. It also analyzes at greater depth the distinction between pentecostalism and fundamentalism. The book correctly interprets the movement as a great coalition of disparate elements, having a post-fundamentalist core and surrounded by a thick layer of conservative Protestant adherents who find themselves attracted by the new evangelical witness.

Some of the conservative Christians attracted to this evangelical alignment have Anabaptist roots. Therefore, the book desires to position historic Anabaptism in relation to this new magnitude, a worthwhile aim. It does not say one cannot be both Anabaptist and evangelical (that would be to fly in the face of the evidence that thousands of believers think they are). The book states only that if this is what people think they are, it is important that the two identities are fused with eyes wide open to what is involved.

The real value of this book is its witness concerning what authentic evangelicalism could look like if the Anabaptist testimony would be heard within it. In my view it is being heard, loud and clear, and we are all better for it.

Clark H. Pinnock is professor of Christian theology at McMaster Divinity College, Hamilton, Ontario.

Missions, Evangelism and Church Growth. Edited by C. Norman Kraus. Scottdale, Pennsylvania, and Kitchener, Ontario: Herald Press, 1980, 165 pp., \$5.95 (\$6.90 Canada) (pb)

Reviewed by Roger E. Hedlund

These essays were given first as addresses in the Discipleship Lecture Forum series of the Center for Discipleship at Goshen (Indiana) College during 1979. Despite their homogeneity, the viewpoints of the contributors to this symposium are different. The authors speak to the implied question, "What is the role of the church in fulfilling God's mission?"

According to C. Norman Kraus, "The goals of mission are neither church growth nor the preaching of the gospel," but the "defeat of all powers, human and super-human, which do not serve the will of God." Kraus affirms that the goal of salvation is "the formation of the new humanity" and stresses the present, historical reality of salvation as a social process. The personal, spiritual dimension of proclaiming the gospel is not excluded, but Kraus seems more concerned for "signs of the new order" than with producing new churches. As Kraus points out, response to the implications of the mandate is determined by one's theology. Not all the contributors appear to share Kraus's conception of salvation.

Wilbert R. Shenk traces the changing role of the missionary in the context of an emerging church in which mission and church are intimately related. The missionary is to serve as an instrument of the Holy Spirit (and the church) to assist the lost "to find the front door, enter the Father's house, and there to be welcomed to their rightful inheritance." Shenk thus stresses the church, Kraus the kingdom.

Howard A. Snyder offers the insight that evangelists are those who lead others in the church to do evangelism. To Snyder the church itself is evangelistic when it is a real community. He assumes that a renewed church will be a growing and evangelistic church—a rather large assumption.

Chester L. Wenger provides examples of "How Churches Grow" as well as insights into reasons for Mennonite failures. "Let us anticipate growth, and prepare for it," urges Wenger who dares to hope that the "Mennonite Church is standing on the verge of a great surge of vitality and growth."

Vern L. Miller presents a model missionary congregation which practices inclusive

rather than exclusive evangelism, and does so without denying the reality of cultural diversity. "When the urban church is perceived to be inclusive it attracts the greatest number of supporters." Miller and several others in this collection take issue with Peter Wagner's "Our Kind of People" model. Miller's case study is a challenging testimonial which might well be retitled, "Accepting All Peoples as My People."

Harold E. Bauman traces the origins of the Church Growth Movement. Not uncritically, he accepts the challenge of the Church Growth Movement as "brushing away our excuses for our nonevangelistic activity." One corrective: as quoted by Bauman, John H. Yoder is wrong if he thinks McGavran implies that any congregation can be satisfied to evangelize only its own people. The heart of McGavran's theology and principles is the demand for discipling the nations, i.e. cross-cultural mission. In fact, McGavran's theology and ideology is strongly obedience-oriented. This fits nicely the Anabaptist concern for the ethics of the kingdom on display in living communities of the Spirit in which there is growth in grace and visible progress in sanctification.

I wish the writers had also concerned themselves with areas and peoples of the world where no congregations of believers exist. Nevertheless, the book is a valuable contribution.

Roger E. Hedlund is coordinator of the Church Growth Research Centre, Kilpauk, India. Formerly, he taught missiology at Union Biblical Seminary, Yavatmal, India.

From the Other's Point of View. By J. Daniel Hess. Scottdale, Pennsylvania, and Kitchener, Ontario: Herald Press, 1980, 270 pp., \$7.95 (\$9.20 Canada) (pb)

Reviewed by Vernon Epp

Recent events such as the civil war in Nicaragua have brought Latin America into the limelight. Again North Americans are faced with the necessity of trying to understand these other Americans, a difficult task indeed. This is a culture—or system of cultures—which, despite many apparent similarities to our own, sometimes appears to be from another world.

A book such as J. Daniel Hess' *From the Other's Point of View* is a welcome and timely contribution in attempting to come to terms with this cultural communications gap.

Speaking both as someone with wide personal experience in Latin America and as a communications expert, Hess succeeds in making this book accessible to the layperson without sacrificing a scientific presentation of the problem. The result of this approach is a two-sided view of communication—or noncommunication—as it occurs both on the personal and the wider cultural levels.

From the Other's Point of View will be appreciated by North Americans, be they missionaries, business people, or just travelers seeking to understand their own contacts with Latin Americans. Those who seek information about the broader aspects which prevail when the North American and the South American cultures come into contact or collide with each other will also find the book informative.

For anyone going south of the Rio Grande, this is a good buy. The book also contains an introduction by Eugene A. Nida and a series of interesting photographs.

Vernon Epp is a free-lance translator in Toronto, Ontario.

Catholic Politics in China and Korea. By Eric O. Hanson. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1980, 140 pp., \$9.95 (pb)

Protestant Pioneers in Korea. By Everett Nichols Hunt, Jr. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1980, 190 pp., \$7.95 (pb)

Reviewed by John A. Lapp

These two volumes are the first to appear in a new series of scholarly works published by Orbis Books in conjunction with the American Society of Missiology. Both volumes are based on doctoral dissertations—Hunt at Chicago and Hanson at Stanford. Both demonstrate the wide range of factors that go into the study of Christian missions, in this case the political and diplomatic dimensions of the missionary encounter.

Hunt writes as an insider having been a missionary in Korea from 1958-79. His primary concern is to understand the confluence of factors that gave Protestant missions in Korea a particular flavor. The major factor is the way the first Presbyterian and Methodist missionaries benefited from the interest of one party of Korean officialdom. Especially the royal family welcomed missionary involvement as a means of cultural modernization. This process took place at the same time and in close relationship with expanding Korean-American diplomatic contacts. These contacts were in part a means for the relatively weak Korean leadership to carve out an independent sphere between the Chinese and Japanese empires.

This study concentrates on the establishment of these missions in the 1880s and 1890s before the large mass movement into these churches. Hunt points out how both missions, though with evangelistic purpose, had to concentrate on medical and educational ministries as a means of gaining acceptance in this strange society. Neither group developed a theology quite adequate for the realities of this situation. Hunt finally describes the first missionaries, each of whom appears larger than life. People like Horace Allen and Horace G. Underwood have long been known for their contributions. Henry Appenzeller, a Pennsylvania German Reformed turned Methodist, was the most thoughtful theologian.

Compared to Hunt, Hanson covers a larger terrain both in space and time. A political scientist with a sensitive understanding of the church, he hypothesizes that the "People's Republic continues the traditional Chinese State religious policy of seeking to penetrate, regulate and control institutional religions and obliterate heretical sects." He studies the Shanghai situation as a paradigm of the larger scene between 1949-60. Shanghai, as a large Christian center and longtime treaty port, is not typically Chinese, but the experience of the church seems to be typical of the larger society. Comparative glances to the situation in Taiwan and South Korea and Vietnam suggest that the traditional Chinese view of the church is not all that different. In each case Hanson proposes that the conflicts are less ideological than political between "the most nationalistic form of the nation-state and the most transcendent form of the transnational organization."

Throughout Chinese history alien ideas have been most welcome during periods of social disintegration. With the triumph of Mao the clash of the transnational church

and reunited nation was inevitable even though no Christian groups posed as a political threat. As in previous epochs of Chinese history there was no one permanent policy but a variety of themes all committed to "penetration, regulation and control."

The specific location of tension was in the choice of church leadership, the extent of public criticism, and participation in public rituals. By the 1960s the church had to accept the state's definition of each. But the church survived and today is once again engaged in a not-nearly-so-onesided dialogue with Chinese authorities. Bishop Kung of Shanghai, who adamantly defended the church and suffered imprisonment, had the long view. "If we resist we will disappear. If we cooperate we will last a few years longer and then disappear. Our present task is to so conduct ourselves that in more propitious times the Church will rise again." The report from Peking on Christmas Eve suggests it has!

While both volumes make an important contribution to missiology, they also have limitations. Both would be more helpful if they had included more on the contemporary experience of other religious groups. Hunt barely refers to the Roman Catholic struggle and persecution in Korea. Hanson pays more attention to Protestantism and Buddhism in China but not enough in his crucial chapters on Shanghai. Neither says enough about the internal life of the church and the relation of piety and worship to public life and political impact.

During these days of church struggle in Korea and new public relationships between Chinese and American Christians these volumes help us understand the long and sometimes painful story of the church in Eastern Asia. Both books deserve the serious attention of old and new China hands, church leaders, and students.

John A. Lapp is an historian and is provost and dean of Goshen (Indiana) College.

Catholic Politics in China and Korea. By Eric O. Hanson. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1980, 140 pp., \$9.95 (pb)

Reviewed by Henry G. Krahn

This book is a study of the conflict between the transnational Roman Catholic Church and the government of the People's Republic of China. The struggle is seen as a continuation of a conflict which existed between the governments of the Ming and Ch'ing dynasties and the universal religions, Christianity and Buddhism. The author's particular interest is in the conflict in Shanghai. He is remarkably successful in developing the history of this struggle from 1949-61 in a way which enables the reader to gain an understanding of the complex interplay of forces which were at work in this struggle for control over the Roman Catholic Chinese communities.

Hanson provides considerable evidence to support his main thesis that the policy of the People's Republic of China towards organized religion is to penetrate, regulate, and control it. The government is less tolerant of the heretical sects (the secret societies) which have been the traditional centers for dissent and rebellion. Hanson argues that the government's nationalistic and anti-transnational character rather than its materialistic or anti-religious nature determines its policy towards institutional religion. The People's Republic, after assuming power in China, was set on controlling all aspects of Chinese life. Religion, like politics, economics, and art must ultimately serve the ends of the national state.

Hanson belongs to the school of thought which attributes the success of the People's Republic of China to the government's ability to adopt many of the traditional ways of ruling China. This is especially true in its attitude towards institutional religion. According to Hanson's thesis, the communist government did not develop a new policy towards the universal religions, but continued the ancient Confucian state policy of seeking to penetrate, regulate, and control institutional religion and to obliterate the heretical sects. Hanson argues convincingly that only during times of dynastic decline or social and political disintegration in China were universal religions able to make progress. In his view the heyday of missions in China during the century of Western imperialism (1850-1950) was one such period.

The chapter dealing with the Shanghai conflict provides an excellent case study of how the People's Republic of China sought

to penetrate, regulate, and control the Roman Catholic Church. The government was determined to nationalize the church. Penetration would assure that the national government loyalists held positions of ecclesiastical leadership. Regulation would limit the number of clerical ordinations and new members. Control would enable the state to use church organizations for political campaigns. In this last aspect, it must be pointed out, the People's Republic differed from the traditional Chinese government. Hanson is probably at his best in this chapter.

The author has an impressive knowledge of the doctrine, organizational structure, and history of the Roman Catholic Church. In his view, the transnational character of the Roman Catholic Church makes it a powerful political force in areas where it has a large following. It is less effective in areas where Roman Catholic Christians are a minority.

The Roman Catholic Church came to China as a missionary religion and was only moderately successful in winning members. Because it lacked a strong following, it never became a major political force in China as it did, for example, in Poland or Vietnam. Hence, it was not in a position to use its political weapons effectively in China. The conflict, as seen from this perspective, was between two unevenly matched contestants. The Roman Catholic Church was a transnational organization with a weak base in China. The People's Republic of China, on the other hand, was a sovereign state which had control over all areas of Chinese life. The real threat posed by Catholicism, as Hanson points out with keen insight, was not in its theological claims nor in its organizational structure, but in the social nature of the church. The government came to realize that the Chinese Roman Catholics were a tightly knit community which was inclined to give its first loyalty to the transnational Roman Catholic Church.

One wonders why Hanson has overlooked events associated with the Cultural Revolution. It seems that this was a time when the government policy was not only to regulate and control the church, but to destroy it. To include this important chapter in recent Chinese history would not, in my view, undermine his thesis. It could be viewed as an exception to well established government policy and practice. On the other hand, the inclusion of studies of the Republic of China (Taiwan) and South Korea are only marginally relevant to the main theme of the book.

Catholic Politics in China and Korea will be of special interest to political scientists, historians, and missiologists who are inter-

ested in Asia. Hanson's pioneering study in Roman Catholic politics in three Asian contexts fills a real void, since American scholarship has focused mainly on Protestantism in Asia. For strategists of the Roman Catholic Church it demonstrates both the political advantages and limitations of a highly diversified ecclesiastical apparatus. For those concerned about the future of Catholicism in China it is a powerful reminder that the Roman Catholic Church cannot expect to return to mainland China as a missionary church or a controlling agency. The Christian Church as a whole is challenged by Hanson to search for creative ways to establish meaningful relationships with the Christian communities who will continue to live under the rule of the People's Republic of China.

Henry G. Krahn is president of Mennonite Brethren Bible College, Winnipeg, Manitoba.

The Human and the Holy: Asian Perspectives in Christian Theology. Edited by Enerito Nacpil and Douglas J. Elwood. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1980, 367 pp., \$14.95 (pb)

Reviewed by Peter Fast

Although Asian perspectives in Christian theology have appeared recently in increasing number on the English-speaking book market, it is nevertheless somewhat of a publishing event when another one comes along. This is the case with *The Human and the Holy*, a record of the proceedings of the All-Asia Consultation on Theological Education for Christian Ministry held in Manila in March 1977.

This book, like preceding attempts to develop Asian perspectives in Christian theology, is further evidence that the search for authenticity as an answer to the credibility crisis in Asian theology (p. 267) is well and healthy even though it is young and fragile (p. v). We must thank Orbis Books for their untiring efforts to make Third World theological enterprises available to the English-reading public.

The book is organized around three central themes. Part one deals with humans and the Holy, part two with humans and

nature, and part three with humans in society and history. A fourth part provides background material to one general theme of the book. For many reasons part four should be read first since it provides helpful survey articles and programmatic approaches to doing theology in Asia (see especially the articles by Elwood and Niles). In each of the first three parts the themes are treated from both biblical and theological perspectives.

Many emphases found in this collection of study papers have appeared in earlier discussions of Asian perspectives—and one may add, of the so-called Third World perspectives in general.

The book has a wholesome emphasis on doing theology (orthopraxis) as over against the Western concern for orthodoxy. Doing theology in Asia must be grounded in Asian soil, in its socio-religious-political realities. The style cannot be armchair. It must be a guerilla-style theology, looking not immediately for finished theological constructs, rather being satisfied with a piecemeal approach (p. 197).

This functional theology presses for a strong social consciousness, a need for interfaith dialogue, and a concern for the secular world. Asian Christians must take the struggle aspect in their countries seriously. God is on the side of the poor, the down-trodden, and the victims of repression. Holiness manifests itself in obedience to God, a willingness to take up the cross and to suffer. The new humanity in Jesus has a cruciform shape (p. 313).

A seminal section is the one dealing with humans and nature. It speaks directly to the problem of our technological society and the present ecological predicament. Chung Chun Kim finds that heritages from Asian cultures have a better understanding of the original meaning of creation and the relationship of harmony between humans and nature than the predominant Western view of "man against nature" (p. 116). This Western view is promoted by Nacpil (pp. 291 ff) who has bought deeply and largely uncritically into Western notions of development with its ideal of rationality, free competition, individualism, and an entrepreneurial work ethic (pp. 294-295).

Also manifest in this volume is the recurring theme (perhaps unavoidable at this stage) of the hate-love relationship of Asian theologians with many facets of the Western world. On the one hand, one needs only to glance at the footnotes to see how dominant Western sources still are in the theological, social, and political analyses of the Asian situation. The call, on the other hand, to

contextualize the gospel and to create an authentic Asian biblical theology (theologies) is pervasive.

This task must continue to remain a priority item on the theological agenda of Asian Christians. The primary and urgent agenda item for Western missionaries and their sending agencies must in turn be to help create in Asia a suitable climate for such development and to provide strong encouragement in that direction.

Peter Fast is assistant professor of Bible at Canadian Mennonite Bible College, Winnipeg, Manitoba. He earlier had a teaching assignment in Indonesia with Mennonite Central Committee.

Eastern Paths and the Christian Way. By Paul Clasper. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1980, 136 pp., \$5.95 (pb)

Reviewed by Gayle Gerber Koontz

Paul Clasper is a Christian missionary at heart now teaching theology and Asian religions at the Chinese University of Hong Kong. In this brief, easy-to-read book he attempts to listen attentively to three of the most ancient and appealing Asian paths—Hinduism, Theravada Buddhism, and Zen—before suggesting the significance of the Christian way for the encounter of faiths.

"The Christian Gospel is different from other perspectives and paths," he writes. "But in the deepest sense it fulfills whatever God-given quests and insights are embodied in these other paths." In these senses it is both **unique** (I prefer the term, specific or particular) and **universal**. While at times it is important and necessary to emphasize the uniqueness of the gospel over its universality, and vice versa, both must be held together in an adequate interpretation of the Christian way.

Clasper believes that divine hints in non-Christian religions serve as preparation for the gospel. We must not be nervous about parallel ideas and pagan Christs, he says, for "grace completes but does not destroy nature." Enlightenment, Tao, and Dharma are strikingly similar to Johannine images of Light, Life, and Logos; dying-rising themes in pagan mythology prefigure the cross and resurrection as symbols of God's creative power in the world. Because of his concern for the neglected universal dimen-

sion of Christianity, Clasper's picture of its unique center tends to be framed more in symbolic than in historical terms. It emphasizes re-creation more than reconciliation, a picture which might be challenged from a strong biblical-historical point of view.

Clasper concludes his book with a look at various models for the encounter of faiths. His own focus on a process of passing over into another tradition and coming back to one's own with fresh eyes avoids the imperialistic tone of the "Christ is the Crown of other religions" view while still affirming Christian truth. "Likely the treasure which contains the more-than-abundant wisdom and power of God is very close to us," Clasper writes. "In our times the journey out, the encounter with the strange but friendly guide, may be the way in which we discover the priceless treasure that resides in our own hearth." And, Clasper suggests, that process may be true for exponents of the Eastern paths as well as for those following the Christian way.

Gayle Gerber Koontz is a student of philosophy of religion and ethics at Boston University, Boston, Massachusetts.

Asia's Struggle for Full Humanity: Toward a Relevant Theology. Edited by Virginia Fabella. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1980, 202 pp., \$8.95 (pb)

Reviewed by Howard Jost

Although subtitled "Papers from the Asian Theological Conference held in Sri Lanka in 1979," the book is much more than a compilation of papers. The major papers are included, as well as the final statement adopted by the conference. In addition the editor writes an excellent introduction reviewing the issues and the process that led to the conference, summarizing the discussions, and explaining the results.

A major presupposition of the conference organizers was that theology (reflection on our faith) mirrors the context in which it is done and the world view of those who do it. Thus Western, middle- and upper-class, male, cleric theology is not relevant to Asians—particularly the vast majority of the poor and marginalized who struggle for full humanity. Eighty Roman Catholics and Protestants with special con-

cern for and experience with the poor in their own countries were invited to report on the struggle in their own countries and to live with marginalized groups in Sri Lanka. Only then were they to discuss the theological issues which grew out of the Asian realities they had directly experienced.

At that point the diversity of Asia became especially apparent. Both poverty and the presence of many religions were identified as crucial parts of the Asian context which theology must address. On the subcontinent the relation of Christianity to Hinduism, Buddhism, and Islam is of special concern, while in the Philippines and Hong Kong the emphasis is more on the harmful effects of technology, modernization, and transnational corporations. Insightful papers representing both perspectives are included in the book.

At the end of the book, a black American, a Latin American and an African reflect on the similarities and differences between the theological concerns they face at home and those raised in Sri Lanka.

This book doesn't require previous knowledge of Asian theology to be appreciated. It would be an excellent introduction for people who have been intending to acquaint themselves with current Christian thinking by Asians but have never found the right place to start.

Howard Jost works in the South Asia office of Church World Service, and lives in Hawthorne, New Jersey. He was a CWS representative in Bangladesh for five years.

Stranded No Longer. By Alex M. Ramos. Nashville: Broadman Press, 1980, 191 pp., \$4.95.

Reviewed by Dorothy Friesen

This book is a moving autobiography told in flashback style of a boy growing up in the 1940s in a remote barrio (village) in the Philippines. Ramos' honesty in recounting his feelings of inadequacy and the limits which poverty forced on his family are touching. The book has plenty of exciting and heart-rending moments—Ramos' embarrassment with his patched clothes worn for a school photo, his exploits as part of the village gang, his capture by Japanese soldiers during World War II.

Ramos' desperation to get out of his barrio situation led him into contact with missionaries and Filipino Protestant leaders who encouraged him to study, helped find him jobs, and eventually sponsored his study in the USA. Ramos remained in the USA and at present is the director of a United Methodist Church ministry in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

This book helps us to understand why so many Filipinos are in North America, the struggles they had to get here, and the struggles they face in a new cultural setting. As a missions book it stands as a damning critique of some Western mission strategy—send the brightest and best to the West for training.

This phenomenon continues. In the past few years, thirteen United Church of Christ pastors from Mindanao, southern Philippines, who were sent to North America to study, remained here. Rural congregations especially are left without shepherds at a time when biblical instruction and spiritual nurture are needed desperately.

The same thing is true in the medical profession. Eighty percent of the doctors graduated in the Philippines are located in the major cities and abroad, while medical needs in rural areas remain unmet. Two thirds of children in the Philippines suffer from some degree of malnourishment. The church road to success has not differed from the secular professions.

In the meantime, young people with idealism are risking their lives in the remote barrios of the Philippines, working with local people, slowly building political organization for the Communist Party. Someday we will ask why there is revolution in the Philippines.

Stranded No Longer provides a glimpse of the answer. In his foreword, D. Elton Trueblood writes, "It is good news that the Gospel of Christ does in fact change human lives." The good news of Christ has been narrowly interpreted so that converts can equate being saved to joining the good life in North America. The hardships, the costly discipleship, and the harvest are left to the communists.

The book cover promises that this is a story from "the Philippine slums . . . to service for the Lord." I was disappointed that Ramos did not deal with service for the Lord from the Philippine social context.

The New Lottie Moon Story. By Catherine B. Allen. Nashville: Broadman Press, 1980, 320 pp., \$7.95

Reviewed by Roland M. Wiens

The New Lottie Moon Story is a well documented presentation of the life and work of Lottie Moon, one of the first single missionary women to go to China under the Southern Baptist Missionary Society and give her life in service for her Master, Jesus Christ.

Allen's resource materials include nearly eighty books and articles; twenty-six pamphlets and periodicals; numerous manuscripts and papers; the letter files of thirty missionaries; many personal letters written by Lottie Moon to churches, mission boards, friends and relatives; and twenty-three personal interviews with people who knew her personally. Thus, material furnished by more than 250 people has helped to reconstruct the life of Miss Moon.

Although she did not graduate, by age sixteen Lottie had a high school education. In 1857 she entered the newly established Albemarle Female Institute (by Baptist men) in Charlottesville. That was at a time when people doubted whether women had the capacity for higher education. The author states that Lottie "took Albemarle Female Institute by storm. Her petite form, twinkling eyes, and merry disposition made her memorable. She was considered a brain and a heretic. Other students admired her, followed her and were slightly terrified by her."

In December 1858 the prayers of Lottie's Christian friends were answered. During a series of evangelistic meetings she professed her faith in Jesus Christ and was noticeably different following her baptism. One of her schoolmates noted that Lottie seemed to be "God's chosen vessel. In His own time He brought her to His feet, meek, submissive, ready to do any work the Master assigned." Her influence among students now counted for Christ.

Dr. John A. Broadus often challenged the Baptist men students of Charlottesville to life commitment to religious work. The young men were not the only ones in the audience. Most Baptists did not think that God called women to anything but to ride along with their husbands. But God's Spirit was moving, and Lottie Moon responded inwardly to the challenge.

Catherine Allen moves from chapter to chapter in a fascinating way depicting how God prepared Lottie Moon, called her into

his service, sustained her through frustrating years of labor until she could rejoice in the salvation of many women in China, culminating with Lottie's laying down her life for her Master.

Because of my China connections—I was born of missionary parents in China, my wife Ann and I worked there for three and a half years, and we revisited China in July 1980 after an absence of twenty-nine years—I have found the reading of this book a tremendous source of information, challenge, and blessing in keeping on with the great task of pioneer evangelism.

I recommend this book to all—younger and older—and trust it will be used to stir more giving, praying, and going to accomplish the mission of the church.

Roland M. Wiens is a pioneer church planter in Japan. He formerly served in China.

Liberation Preaching. By Justo L. and Catherine G. González. Nashville: Abingdon, 1980, 127 pp., \$4.95 (pb)

Reviewed by Bruno Epp

This book by González and Gonzáles helps us to ask this question: Can I as a preacher be a Liberation Theology preacher? It also seeks to guide the reader to become just that—not an easy pilgrimage!

To be involved in Liberation Theology is to see God and humanity from the perspective of those who traditionally have been the powerless in society and voiceless in the church. It is to experience the empowerment of the gospel, not only in an inner sense but also in the sense that it compels and enables to strive for justice.

The authors say further that liberation theologies are politically concrete but not universal. Such theologies always relate to a particular location and circumstance; taken in their historical context, they presuppose that humanity and the world are both changing and changeable. Thus they are legitimate in the sense that their insights have a bearing on every single doctrine of the faith as preached, taught, and believed.

For the preacher doing liberation preaching, Liberation Theology means to reevaluate and reinterpret the Scriptures. This is done best by applying the "hermeneutic circle" (Juan Luis Segundo), the main thrust of

Dorothy Friesen served from 1976-79 with Mennonite Central Committee in Asia, primarily in the Philippines.

which requires the preacher to be ideologically suspicious of all traditional views and interpretations of the Bible, including being suspicious of translations, lectionaries, and commentaries. "Once we learn to read such interpretations with suspicion we gain new love and respect, first for the Bible, and then for a tradition of which we too are a part, and which we helping to shape" (33).

Who then are the interpreters that point the way to liberation preaching? According to the authors, they are Ignatious of Antioch, Hermas, and Abrose; more recently Cardenal of Nicaragua, Prof. Joanne Dewey, and Mwoleka of Tanzania; and better still, the poor and oppressed whose insights seldom reach printed form.

To interpret the Bible means to consider a political question: *By political we mean the interplay of power, the question of who is expected to have authority over whom, or of who is an "insider" and who is not. But above all in this context, the manner in which God intervenes in such relations, and how God responds to the power or powerlessness of various individuals or groups of people* (70).

It means further to reassign the cast of characters: putting ourselves into the role, not of Philip who received Simon Magus into the church but into the role of Simon Magus. What a difference that makes in the understanding and application of Scripture!

It also means to imagine a different socio-political setting, and thereby to consider the direction of the action. A text needs to be placed in its historical setting and the question asked as to the direction of God's action—as in Ephesians 5:21-6:9. God is seeking to help those who are unequally and unjustly treated.

In a concluding chapter the dynamics of liberation preaching help us to see the changes that need to happen in the preacher who assumes a liberation-preacher stance. As "the medium is the message," both preacher and congregation must reflect upon their social, political, and economic identity. How are they being viewed by the powerless, the powerless who are present and those who are absent? A preacher of liberation is an active participant in the movement of liberation.

Added to the book's five parts is one with notes, bibliography, indices of subjects and authors, and biblical references. The book is clearly written—challenging, to say the least—and it could radically revolutionize if taken seriously.

Justo Luis González and Catherine Gun-salus González are husband and wife. He is an ordained minister of the United Method-

ist Church; she is ordained in the Presbyterian Church. Both are professors, the former at the Interdenominational Theological Center in Atlanta (theology), the latter at Columbus Theological Seminary in Decatur, Georgia (church history). They received their doctorates from Yale and Boston University, respectively.

Bruno Epp is a minister in Clearbrook, British Columbia. He formerly served as a church worker in Paraguay and Brazil.

Jesus of Gramoven. By Antonio Perez-Esclarin. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1980, 151 pp., \$5.95, (pb)

Reviewed by John Goertz

This fascinating modern-day parable arises out of the theological-political concerns of the church in Latin America today. Set in Gramoven—a Caracas, Venezuela, slum—it focuses on the life of one Jesus Rodriguez, a popular leader who has raised the level of people's awareness of their oppressed condition.

The occasion is Holy Week. The author uniquely sets the events of Holy Week in Caracas against those of that first Holy Week which resulted in Jesus Christ's death and resurrection.

Several interesting parallels emerge. As the Jewish nation was under Roman captivity and oppression, so the masses of Latin America are under religious, political, and economic oppression. As his own people delivered Jesus Christ for crucifixion, so Jesus Rodriguez is victimized by his own.

Ironically the church, whose mission it is to liberate and bring dignity to people, is seen to have become not only irrelevant, but an instrument of oppression and manipulation: magical, idolatrous, enslaving. The author (through Jesus Rodriguez) declares, "In Latin America, liberation will become inevitable when Christians understand their faith as a political struggle for a just society." True Christian love is active. It should become "a force for liberation."

The theology reflected in this book challenges the Anabaptist view of the church, its mission, its relation to politics, its ethic of love, and its understanding of the redemptive work of Christ in relation to peace and justice. It compels us to clarify our the-

ology: Is it sufficiently comprehensive (or open) to deal with the real issues of our day? Can Western Christian mission to third-world countries avoid being either drawn into the oppressed people's struggle for justice on the one hand, or viewed as one of the oppressing forces on the other?

Written on a popular level and in a dramatic format, the book will have great appeal to the world-aware lay Christian. And, because of the context out of which it arises and the condition to which it speaks, it should be read by missionaries and by those who are concerned about the theology of mission and of the church. It is a compelling parable not only for these reasons, but also because its author, a Venezuelan Jesuit, incarnates the cause he dramatizes in the book. Having left his academic life as professor in a Caracas university, he now lives with the oppressed.

John Goertz is an instructor of mission at Columbia Bible Institute, Clearbrook, British Columbia. He formerly was a Mennonite Brethren missionary in Panama.

The Cry of My People. By Esther and Mortimer Arias. New York: Friendship Press, 1980, 146 pp., \$2.95 (pb)

Reviewed by Héctor G. Valencia V.

The Cry of My People by Esther and Mortimer Arias, members of the Methodist Church in Lower South America, is a penetrating study of the spiritual, social, economic, and political situation in Latin America. It shows the historical development of the thought processes and institutions in that section of the world. These developments have not been favorable to the poor, the largest and most vulnerable segment of Latin American society.

The chapters on relationships between North and South, economic growth, human rights, and women's liberation contain excellent information and comments. Esther and Mortimer succeed in showing how the Protestant churches have discovered society and the Roman Catholic Church has discovered the poor by quoting many documents and pronouncements of groups and individuals. The study leads one to conclude that the radical wings of both churches have a common ground regarding

the repudiation of injustice, repression, poverty, and other social evils. The last chapter is devoted to the theology of liberation. The works of Gustavo Gutiérrez (a Roman Catholic) and Rubem Alves (a Protestant), are prominent in this analysis.

This book represents an honest effort to present in a simplified, yet not superficial, way the realities of Latin America. Enough facts and figures are used to convey the seriousness of the problems without allowing the book to become a statistical trap. The comments of the authors are critical but fair, although it is obvious they are in sympathy with the liberationists. *The Cry of My People* is a loud call for a change of attitude on the part of North Americans towards their neighbors to the South.

In Every Person Who Hopes. . . . By James and Margaret Goff. New York: Friendship Press, 1980, 120 pp., \$3.75 (pb)

Reviewed by Héctor G. Valencia V.

Margaret and James Goff, veteran missionaries to Latin America, have condensed into 120 pages the plight of Latin Americans today, the majority who are suffering from injustice, oppression, poverty, and destitution. The authors back their statements by presenting a gallery of Latin Americans who suffer under the present system—poor children who work and suffer; the “disappeared ones,” victims of persecution and duress; the exiles; and the martyrs. Quoting generously from Gustavo Gutiérrez, Leonard Boff, and other authors, Goffs contend that the solution to the problems of Latin America is not development, but rather, a radical revolution. The conservative Protestant churches are showing signs of understanding the real sources of alienation.

The book includes a collection of protest songs, poems, and cartoons of recent origin taken from several publications on the continent. This book, written from an unapologetic liberationist viewpoint, should be welcomed by all those interested in the current issues of Latin America.

Héctor G. Valencia V. is Executive Secretary for The Mennonite Church of Colombia. He served 5½ years as secretary for Latin America for the Commission on Overseas Mission of the General Conference Mennonite Church, Newton, Kansas.

The Indian Awakening in Latin America. Edited by Yves Materne. New York: Friendship Press, 1980, 127 pp. \$5.95 (pb)

Reviewed by Willis G. Horst

This book is a collection of statements by a native Latin American which according to the author shows that a movement of American Indians across Latin America has come into existence. “The declarations in this book testify to the Indians’ resolve to free themselves of the yoke of foreign domination and to assert their own thought and ideas” (p. 9).

Materne has provided a real service by making available to us these manifestos of Latin American Indian groups who are committed to the struggle for a new social order. Here one gains deep insights into some of the underlying values which have made possible a continued American Indian existence in the face of centuries of oppression and deliberate ethnocide. Most important among these values are a responsible relationship to the earth, an awareness of peoplehood which bridges cultural and ideological diversity, and a shared history of suffering. These declarations have been formulated by a small minority of politically aware Indians.

However, many forces are at work in Latin America. Whether or not those leaders who made these statements turn out to be the true representatives of the Indian peoples as a whole remains to be seen. Can they become an historically conscious people and still remain Indians? Even though these declarations may not represent the majority viewpoint, they do express the views of the most articulate segment of Latin American Indians. As such, they need to be heard by everyone involved with native American concerns in both of the Americas. A warning might be in order. In some Latin American countries under the domination of anti-communist military governments, it might be dangerous to have this book on your desk.

I have become aware through the work of Millard Lind at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries, Elkhart, Indiana, of the similarities between traditional American Indian cultures and the Old Testament tribes of Israel in regard to their political and economic structures. Both were egalitarian with built-in ways for controlling the development of class differentiation and class domination. Politically, both were structured upon the basic unit of the household with rejection of centralized control, except

for federations in times of crisis. Both rejected an exploitative relation to the land.

Today, the basic values of Western technological civilization are being questioned more seriously than ever. While many are turning to a Marxist sociology or to Eastern religions in a search for handles to critique a crumbling Western capitalism, I would suggest that a look at the American Indian alternatives as well as a fresh look at the biblical models through Indian eyes would be helpful. Liberation theologians in Latin America would do well to look closer home in their search for a critique of capitalism. Instead of depending on an imported Marxist sociology, they could build upon something authentically Latin American. Perhaps in the construction of a new future, American Indians will indeed offer us more than fodder for anthropological dissertations and color for the money-hungry cinema industry. But we will need to be quiet long enough to listen.

Can we who are involved in Christian missions listen to a people long enough to learn from them about such things as ecology and reverence for creation, economic and political organization, suffering and survival? At the least let us recognize that when we ask the Indian peoples to read the biblical story through the eyes of an individualistic, materialistic, capitalistic, and nationalistic Western theology, we have added yet more injustices to the heavy load forced upon them since the time Columbus first set foot on this part of the world.

A more just approach would encourage a reading of the texts through their cultural eyes. The resulting contextualization ought to resemble their own roots more than an imported or imposed Christendom. In the process we might get some helpful cues for building authentic counter-culture church communities in our own society. That the sophisticated Western civilization might have something to learn from the “uncivilized native peoples” might seem absurd to some. Doesn’t God often use the weak to confound the strong? An Indian named Francisco Servén said at the Indian parliament held in Paraguay in October 1974, “We were the masters of the land, but we have become true outcasts since the gringos arrived. We hope that a day will come when they will realize that we are their roots and that together we must form, as it were, one large tree with its branches and its flowers.”

Materne follows that quote with an optimistic statement, “The dawn of the day is in fact arising. The silhouette of that tree which has already signified revolutions

for liberty and popular solidarities seems to stand out again with the Indian awakening and with its equivalents in Western experiences and research" (p. 122).

As Christian missionaries, we may rightly be uncomfortable with too much solidarity with revolutionary movements, but we must have some clear grasp of the movement of history toward the new heaven and the new earth where God's shalom will prevail. This book can help us to be awakened to what some Latin American Indian peoples are saying as they awake to the movement of history.

Willis Horst has served in the Argentine Chaco among the Tobas since 1970 with Mennonite Board of Missions, Elkhart, Indiana.

God's Awesome Challenge. By Harold C. Bennett, compiler and contributor. Nashville: Broadman Press, 1980, 159 pp., \$5.95

Reviewed by Calvin E. Shenk

The major purpose of this book is to inspire people to become involved in mission both in North America and abroad. The Southern Baptist Convention at its 1978 meeting adopted a Bold Mission Thrust by which they committed themselves to share the missionary message with every person in the world by the year 2000. This book indicates interest in mobilizing for mission rather than philosophizing about mission. This is both a strength and a weakness.

The book is a compilation of seventeen sermons by executives and pastors in the Southern Baptist tradition. Because it is a compilation, there is a great deal of diversity in the messages, but they are held together by focusing on the need to take witness seriously. The sermons, based on biblical passages from which lessons for differing aspects of mission are drawn, are profusely illustrated with material common to the Southern Baptist context (including illustrations from football!). Since it is geared to the general Christian populace in these settings, it is written interestingly and is easy to read; at the same time it lacks depth and has little fresh insight. The simplicity of style is helpful for motivation, but at points it also inadvertently encourages simplistic analysis.

One can appreciate the commitment and courage evident in this book. There is no

equivocation about the realities of sin and salvation or the need for evangelism. Christ is clearly the central focus of mission. For the most part, evangelism is described in personal terms. The appeal to witness is addressed to individuals and congregations. It is refreshing to hear the call to mission being addressed so urgently to the contemporary church.

But since this challenge is addressed to the contemporary church, one wishes more were said about the context of the world in the decades between now and the year 2000 in which today's church is called to witness. How will this particular context inform one's sense of call, call forth the particular uniqueness of Christian faith, or modify the forms of mission? In some respects these same sermons might have been preached two decades ago. One also wishes that relational factors in mission were emphasized as much as proclamational aspects. By trying to mobilize for commitment to mission, overtones of bigness and triumphalism sometimes emerge.

It is undoubtedly easier to call for commitment than to sustain commitment in face of the hard realities of mission in the decades ahead. This book places the call before us all. But as we seek to follow this call in the face of the changing shape of the world, there is need to be authentic and creative in witness. For help in this we will need to consult other books.

Calvin E. Shenk is the Mission Interest Coordinator at Eastern Mennonite College, Harrisonburg, Virginia. He served fifteen years in Ethiopia with Eastern Mennonite Board of Missions and Charities, Salunga, Pennsylvania.

Good News is Bad News is Good News. By William K. McElvaney. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1980, 132 pp., \$5.95 (pb)

Reviewed by Harry Huebner

McElvaney's main thesis is that in order for good news to be good news for Western Christians, it must first become bad news. This is so because God shows partiality to the poor and the oppressed, his main interest being liberation. The blessed assurance of salvation therefore entails a blessed disturbance.

McElvaney laments the fact that too

many of our churches no longer tolerate a disturbing message. Inwardly we all know that the status quo damns, and Jesus alone through disturbance and grace saves. But we don't like to hear that message. Western humanity has an upside-down understanding of salvation. We think that the abundant life comes in possessing plenty—power, things, money. It doesn't. Abundant living comes in **kenosis** (cornucopia through kenosis). That is why the poor in Jesus' eyes are blessed. This is hard for the oppressors—whites over non-whites, men over women, rich over poor—to see. But it is true. This also is why true liberation can never be an exchange of power. Christian liberation entails mutual kenosis.

McElvaney identifies some specific challenges for the twentieth-century church. (1) It must recognize that a lifestyle is linked to a life system. It is therefore difficult and of little consequence to simply ask individuals to change their lifestyles, however virtuous that may be. (2) Our North American life system is a predatory system, preying upon poor nations. (3) This fact must be on the agenda of North American churches. (4) Whatever priorities the church sets, it must place **people** on top. (5) Evangelism must not separate individual salvation from social salvation. (6) Worship services must be infused with the spirit of Liberation Theology. Liturgy—work of the people—must have a life connection.

The book, witty and entertaining, is less theological in style than sermonic. This is both its strength and its weakness. It stimulates, excites, motivates, and is refreshingly captivating with its many one-liner symbolic expressions. It is also good theology. But it leaves the major theologizing to its readers. It points in a direction many theologians will be compelled to pursue.

The last chapter is a puzzle. Here McElvaney responds to critical comments made of liberation theologians. He wishes to defend both the critics and the proponents of Liberation Theology. This necessitates a change in style—from the personal to the polemic—but he refuses such a change. This leaves the chapter weak, unclear, and general.

The book is timely and worth every minute of the few hours it takes to read. Even if—or perhaps precisely because—it disturbs the prosperous Christians, it is a delight to read. After all, blessed disturbance is blessed assurance.

Harry Huebner teaches at Canadian Mennonite Bible College, Winnipeg, Manitoba.

Sharing Your Faith with a Muslim. By Abdiyah Akbar Abdul-Haqq. Minneapolis: Bethany Fellowship, Inc., 1980, 189 pp., \$4.95 (pb)

Reviewed by Dan Nickel

As a missionary to Indonesian Muslims, I eagerly sought Akbar Haqq's *Sharing Your Faith with a Muslim* as an added tool for my ministry. I had hoped for many practical suggestions, but Haqq has left readers to dig for themselves by producing a thoroughgoing Christology. While providing the Christian missionary with an apologetic, the book addresses itself to Muslim readers, also. By using this method Haqq communicates a strong evangelical thrust.

This approach is characteristic of Haqq's ministry. He is an evangelist with the Billy Graham Association. His father was a convert from Islam to Christianity. Haqq preaches in mass evangelistic meetings all over the world, but he concentrates mainly on his native India. In addition to English, he speaks Hindi, Urdu, and Punjabi—languages of the people of North India. He also reads in Urdu, Persian, Arabic, and Greek.

Sharing Your Faith with a Muslim grew out of a paper the author read during the Pan African Congress on Evangelism held in Nairobi, Kenya, December 13-19, 1976. Extensive expansion, evidenced by the many long quotations of twenty-five lines and more, has produced fourteen chapters of moderately readable material. The style, however, is scholarly and may present a challenge to the average layperson.

Haqq confronts Muslims on their own ground. Where the Koran alludes to events in the extra-canonical literature (apocrypha), he elucidates first from the apocrypha, then moves on to the gospel. At one point (p. 100) Haqq seemingly tries to prove the divinity of Christ by using apocryphal arguments. This method may be allowed in the name of contextualization, but it is not to be trusted as a final rebuttal.

What is lacking most of all is illustration. Not a single case study is included whereby one may know in which situations certain approaches have been applied with success. Most certainly from his wide experience as an evangelist, Haqq could have given examples. Perhaps he took his cue from proponents of dialogue like Henry Martyn of the British India tradition who too had a burning heart for the salvation of Muslims.

Sharing Your Faith with a Muslim is recommended reading for all—mission board members, mission executives, missionaries, pastors, local church mission committees, missions professors, and students—who are serious about communicating the truth of the gospel to Muslims. The Fuller School of World Mission has listed this book as required reading.

Dan Nickel has served with Mennonite Brethren Mission/Services in India, 1965-73, and Indonesia, 1975-80.

Discipling through Theological Education by Extension. By Vergil Gerber. Evanston: Moody Press, 1980, 191 pp., \$4.95 (pb)

Reviewed by B. Frank Byler

This is a worthwhile book to circulate among overseas and home missions workers. The book affirms the need for leadership preparation at the congregational level so present leaders can be helped. The book can give a whole new outlook to people who know little about TEE. It can also remind, affirm, and challenge to action those who do know something about it.

Some of the healthy emphases that I see in this book are:

1. There should be an authentic plural, shared ministry in the local congregation if the church is to be a ministering body. Local ministers need preparation for their task.

2. Leadership training should be integrated into a current ministry of each student. Each should be teaching, preaching, serving, witnessing, planting a church, or whatever task in order to qualify for enrollment in a course. We prepare people who are ministering more than people who are to become ministers.

3. This "preparation of the saints for the ministry" is fundamental to the duties of pastors, not an option. TEE provides practical resources for pastors to carry out this important part of their task.

4. Evangelism can prosper best where small groups are formed around families in homes. These become new churches led by ministers who are learning as they plant and serve. In this context people are converted and added to the group by baptism simultaneously with the practical training of new ministers.

5. Conversion should lead to obedient discipleship, enlightened ministry, and the planting of new churches as new members accept their ministry and begin their apprenticeship.

6. The book asks for **something more**. More than converts we want disciples; more than individuals we want families; more than evangelism we want new churches; more than young prospects we want mature leaders; more than knowledge we want obedience; more than a pastor we want many ministers in each congregation.

B. Frank Byler and his wife Anna have served in South America with Mennonite Board of Missions, Elkhart, Indiana, since 1947.

A People Reborn. By Christian Keysser (translated by Alfred Allin and John Kuder). Pasadena: William Carey, 1980, 306 pp., \$9.95 (pb)

Reviewed by Paul G. Hiebert

Many good books discuss mission theory, and many good books describe mission work, but few combine the two. Keysser's study of German Lutheran work in the highlands of New Guinea from 1905-50 shows how a careful and sensitive analysis of the mission scene can help us understand the dynamics involved in planting churches, and provide us with basic missiological principles that can be applied in many cultural settings.

Keysser's study is based on twenty-two years of unbroken service in the region during which time the Sattelberg churches came into being, grew to maturity, and encountered the problems of second-generation Christianity. He breaks his analysis into some fifty specific topics including the birth of a church, leadership, church order, residues of traditional religious beliefs, indigenization of Christian music, along with prayer and other forms, decline in spiritual concern, revivals, handling of sin within the church, and building Christian unity across tribes.

Keysser is first and foremost a practicing missionary; his analysis rings true both to fact and to insight. The latter finds ready application to the growth of the church in other parts of the world. Although the writer worked within a colonial framework, he is

remarkably sensitive to the culture of the people and committed to the development of a strong autonomous church that discerns God's leading in its own growth. At times a mild paternalism appears, but this should not blind us to his strong identification with the people.

Keysser also shows the effects of European civilization on New Guinea Christians: their shock upon discovering the debauchery of white traders and military men, the heavy-handed rule of colonial governors, and the destruction of the region in World War II. He reflects with shame on the low level of spiritual commitment he found in the European churches when he returned home.

The greatest value of this book lies in the applicability of the many principles Keysser draws from his years of service to other mission settings. Throughout he illustrates the importance of object lessons, parables, dramatic presentations, creative Christian rituals, and other concrete forms to express abstract Christian messages in tribal societies for whom rituals have played an important part in religious communication. The descriptions of his own relationship to the Sattelberg congregations are excellent case studies for analyzing the critical relationship of a missionary to the people he or she serves.

Keysser's thinking has continued to influence modern missions, particularly in Germany, through the work of Vicedom, Neumeier Strauss, and Wilhelm Bergmann who studied under him at the mission seminary in Neuendettelsau after his return from New Guinea.

Paul G. Hiebert is professor of mission anthropology at the School of World Mission, Fuller Theological Seminary, Pasadena, California.

War or Peace? The Search for New Answers. Edited by Thomas A. Shannon. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1980, 255 pp., \$9.95 (pb)

Reviewed by John H. Yoder

Gathered in honor of Gordon Zahn, one of the few Roman Catholic conscientious objectors of World War II and a sociologist

of dissent, these essays describe the growing potential of peace concern especially within the Roman Catholic world. Editor Shannon has collected all the right writers to portray the realm where Zahn made his impact. Without exaggeration Zahn is described as "almost totally responsible for the new status and respect that pacifism enjoys within American Catholicism."

The essays explore the potential of the just war tradition to be more critical of war than it has been in the past, and the potential of pacifism to develop more affirmative visions of "peacemaking statecraft" than minority pacifism has had any place for. Mainline Methodist pacifists Paul Deats and Water Muelder build a bridge to conversations within the World Council of Churches and within majority Protestant social ethics.

The book is a powerful testimony to the ability of a tiny handful of devoted witnesses—Zahn himself, Paul Hanley Furfey, and Dorothy Day—to create a movement of authentic spiritual and moral renewal against the stream of church and nation.

The special interest of this witness for readers of *Mission Focus* flows from the fact that this movement could take place without correlation with a peace church tradition or deep debate about biblical interpretation. While Mennonite evangelism has been embarrassed about the peace tradition, feeling it less portable or translatable than the rest of the gospel, Zahn and his allies could withstand the demons of war without the help of any tradition but the Scriptures and the lives of the saints. While Mennonites at home in our ghetto culture spoke of an abyss between church and culture, these Catholics—unhampered by theories about separation—lived real nonconformity effectively, evangelistically.

The prospect of a bridge between pacifist and nonpacifist moral stances is overdue. Peace church people concerned for the logical uniqueness of nonresistance have been overly suspicious of possible practical witness shared with other Christians, thereby signaling limited trust in our own message.

Shannon's book will be a strong resource to introduce students to the issues without theological pretentiousness or denominational provincialism.

John H. Yoder is professor of theology at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries, Elkhart, Indiana.

Southern Baptist historian E. Glenn Hinson wrote recently of his displeasure when Baptists are confused with evangelicals. Undoubtedly, many non-Baptist readers react to that statement in degrees ranging from mild surprise to outright shock. They ask, "Aren't Baptists evangelicals?" Hardly, says Hinson. He traces present-day evangelicals to sixteenth and seventeenth century Protestant scholastics who emphasized above all else the objective Word of God in the Bible. Today's English and American fundamentalists have descended from the scholastics.

By contrast Hinson traces the Baptist lineage to persecuted and harrassed seventeenth century dissenters who cried out for liberty. To this day they emphasize that genuine faith is free and voluntary. Hinson cites other points on which Baptists and evangelicals differ. What disturbs him is that some Baptists are confused. They continue calling themselves Baptists but act like evangelicals.

Sound familiar? Baptists, like nearly every other group—religious, social, professional—are suffering an identity crisis. The struggle to know who we are is not in itself bad; it is almost inevitable. We ought to be more relaxed in responding to those among us who are caught up in that particular quest, yet recognize it as a matter of serious consequence.

One source of this crisis is the way the ground continually shifts around us. In my middle years I look at the world through a different set of lenses from those I used as a child or as a young adult. This turning, shifting process is a complex of elements—historical, psychological, sociological, vocational.

In the introduction to his book, *The Identity Society*, William Glasser suggests that the entire Western world has become an *identity society*. He explains this term by quoting Marshall McLuhan: "From Tokyo to Paris to Columbia, youth mindlessly acts its identity quest in the theatre of the streets searching not for **goals** but for **roles**, striving for an identity that eludes them." McLuhan wanted to point out the difference between traditional society and industrial society.

Throughout most of history the most important challenge facing humankind was simply to survive. People struggled toward goals which assured their security. But, according to McLuhan, industrial society has opened up a new possibility. Meaning and value no longer stem from having achieved certain goals in life. Rather meaning and value result from being valued for who we are as human beings. People continue to struggle toward goals, but goals are set in terms of whether they will enhance self-worth.

This brief excursion into psychology has its missiological point. To evangelize—to bring good news to the people of **identity society**—will involve a different set of questions

from what the members of a traditional society are asking. The identity question focuses inward on the self. To pursue self-fulfillment is to pursue a mirage. Much popular religion undergirds the pursuit of selfish interests.

The Gospel of Jesus Christ recognizes that every human being suffers from a distorted identity. The source of that distortion is sin manifested as pride, selfishness, greed, injustice, lust, violence. Conversion to Jesus involves turning around, walking away from the old life and toward him. Making Jesus Christ lord of one's life is to enter on a pilgrimage of self-discovery and self-denial because we make his life our own.

A similar point can be made with regard to the group. In **identity society** a group can also become preoccupied with its own well-being. Some Christian congregations proclaim loud and clear that they are more interested in themselves than in the world. Good news will have a difficult time emanating from such a group. Neither will society expect such a group to be a source of compassion, healing, and salvation.

I have suggested that identity is important, but it can be both healthy and unhealthy. Why should it bother Professor Hinson that the Baptist identity is being confused with that of the evangelicals? Let's consider several points.

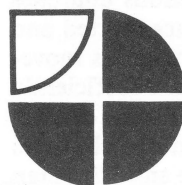
First, in contrast to the psychological interpretation, identity is the product of relationship. The New Testament speaks of the new person, the new creation, the new Adam as the result of an encounter—not with oneself in isolation—but with the living God.

Second, that encounter connects the individual with a particular stream of history which is understood as the acts of God among and on behalf of his people. That history gives meaning to the present and hope for the future. The conviction that God actively intervenes on the plane of history as he leads his people infuses them with hope and purpose. Identity always becomes distorted when an individual or group becomes preoccupied with only the past, or the present, or the future.

Third, a sound identity includes **role** and **goal**, being and doing, position and mission. A healthy identity allows for wholesome self-understanding but never as an end in itself. It springs to life only when it becomes the means of benediction for others.

Fourth, identity signifies uniqueness and originality. God's varied grace comes to each individual and group in particular ways. Each identity partakes of both the human and divine, God stooping down to dignify us by his gracious action where we are. God created variety. Would that we were more ready to affirm the goodness of God in allowing such rich color and contrast.—Wilbert R. Shenk

MISSION FOCUS



New Vistas: Missionary and Ecumenical

Religious Movements in Primal (or Tribal) Societies

HAROLD W. TURNER

Not so long ago Christians looked out upon what seemed a comparatively simple religious scene. They saw their own faith, the major non-Christian religions (Hindu, Buddhist, Sikh, Chinese), and the religions of the tribal peoples which were little more than superstitious mumbo-jumbo. All these—and especially the latter—were destined to succumb to the advance of the Christian faith, and great advances in that direction have been made in the last two centuries of modern missions. Now the scene is much more complex—and more realistic—the perception of which is another kind of advance.

An overview of the world religious scene

Religious vitality across the world

On the one hand we in the Western nations live amid assumptions, spoken and unspoken, that all religions are due to vanish in an emancipated secular world. This is seemingly supported by the decline of institutional Christianity's traditional strongholds in most Western societies. On the other hand some of the great world faiths have shown a resurgence (Islam in Iran, Pakistan, and some Arab countries). Even some of the primal religions have shown a remarkable persistence and capacity to adapt although long surrounded by Westernizing and Christianizing influences (the Hopi Indian religion in Arizona and the Shona Mwari religion in Zimbabwe). In addition there have been many new religious movements within Western societies, not the least in the USA. These are usually known collectively—although misleadingly—as cults, despite their wide range of content from Christian fundamentalism to

sheer Satanism. The most widely publicized in recent years have been the People's Temple with its disastrous Jonestown climax, and the Unification Church or Moonies. Overall, predictions of the disappearance of religion have been seriously erroneous. Never before in history has there been such a variety of religious forms or more exploration, innovation, and creativity.

An unexpected part of the Christian story

Our particular focus in these pages is upon yet another and even more widely spread range of new religious movements of which most people in Western countries are unaware. These movements have arisen across all continents wherever the Christian religion and Western culture have penetrated the tribal peoples in the course of the great expansion of white peoples and of missions in the last few centuries.

We all share the general picture of this expansion: sending of missionaries, building of a mission community, growth of an indigenous church, and emergence of new autonomous churches where a missionary is either a full

While teaching in Sierra Leone and Nigeria, Harold W. Turner wrote a two-volume study of the Church of the Lord (Aladura) published as African Independent Church (Clarendon, 1967). Since then he has broadened his scope of interest to include the study of these movements worldwide, developing a definitive bibliography and collecting extensive primary data. He founded the Project for New Religious Movements (PRONERM) which has been located in Aberdeen, Scotland, and is now being relocated to Birmingham, England.

member, a fraternal worker, or not needed at all. We could develop this image further and even then miss the extensive allied phenomena with which these pages are to deal.

Beyond the area of missions and indigenous churches the tribal peoples have been producing an unexpected and often unrecognized response through new religious movements of their own creation. Some of these are sufficiently Christian to be independent churches, even if some of their ways of being Christian are different from the churches developed from the missions. Others may be anti-Christian but at the same time may reveal some important transformation of the old primal religion towards a more biblical position.

These new religious movements have three things in common. First, they are new. They belong neither within the primal religion nor, when they first arise, to the community of missions and daughter churches; both sides tend to be hostile towards them. Second, they are all local, indigenous do-it-ourselves religious responses—voluntary and innovative interactions with the Christian faith. They belong to the local people as their own creation. Finally, they belong to us as Christians. Since none of these movements would have arisen if the Christian faith had not come to produce this kind of interaction, they may be called our offspring, no matter how off-beat or unwanted they may seem. They are part of the Christian story along with the history of missions and of indigenous churches.

Churches and missions are now starting to investigate more seriously this surprising, unexpected, and sometimes exotic part of the Christian story.

The world range of this new story

I became involved with these movements quite unwittingly in 1957 through a casual encounter with a leader of an African movement engaged in a ritual on a beach in Sierra Leone, West Africa. What seemed then such an accidental and brief meeting has subsequently proved to be a deeply providential event which has changed the course of my life and work. From the developing involvement with what proved to be an African independent church, I was led to serious inquiry into its origins; this introduced me to its Nigerian beginnings. Here I found a specific sparking point in the 1918 worldwide influenza epidemic. This experience was traumatic around the world, but nowhere more so than for tribal peoples. When neither traditional religion and healing methods nor the white people's churches and Western medicines were of any help, a group of Nigerian Christians formed their own prayer group for protection and healing with some apparent success. This independent initiative continued and developed further after the plague. From it sprang a range of independent African prayer-healing churches with many new unorthodox features from the viewpoint of the missions and older churches in Nigeria. It was one of these which had spread by its efforts around West Africa that I met through my beach encounter.

A few years later I was back in my country of origin, New Zealand, and discovered that the largest and best-known movement of this kind among the Maori people had begun in similar fashion. Its founder, Wiremu Ratana, was responsible for a similar successful independent initiative during the same traumatic epidemic of 1918. Today the Ratana Church has nearly thirty thousand adherents and considerable influence among the Maori people.

Later I was to learn that Simon Kimbangu, the founder of the largest independent church in Africa, the Kimban-

guist Church, had also found the 1918 epidemic to be a critical point in his experience. In each case a traumatic situation had led to the formation of a new religious movement drawing on the two different religious traditions available, creating a new and vital amalgum. The more I examined these developments in all continents, the more it became clear that this was a new and creative religious development common to tribal peoples in all areas and cultures.

While the founders of each of these movements had belonged to a local Christian community, their lives had moved into another orbit and the movements they created were very different from the churches they had left. Whatever their Christian content, whether orthodox or unorthodox, this was now expressed in forms deeply rooted in the local tribal culture. This was a tremendous achievement, something which missions set as part of their goal.

Other movements may derive from founders who had a more remote contact with the Christian community and a garbled understanding of the Christian gospel. A striking example appeared among the Western Guaymi or Ngawbe Indians who had maintained a separate and traditional style of life in the mountains of Panama in spite of increasing Western and Christian influences ever since Columbus

September 1981
Volume 9 Number 3

MISSION FOCUS



45 New Religious Movements in Primal (or Tribal) Societies

Harold W. Turner

55 An Open Window into the Harrist Church

David A. Shank

60 In review

64 Editorial

EDITORIAL COUNCIL

Editor Wilbert R. Shenk

Managing editor Willard E. Roth

Review editors Adolf Ens, Peter M. Hamm

Other member Robert L. Ramseyer

Editorial assistants Rebecca E. Miller, Merlin Becker-Hoover

MISSION FOCUS (ISSN 0164-4696) is published quarterly by Mennonite Board of Missions, 500 South Main, Elkhart, Indiana. Single copies available without charge. Send correspondence to Box 370, Elkhart, IN 46515. Second-class postage paid at Elkhart, IN 46515. Lithographed in USA. Copyright 1981 by Mennonite Board of Missions. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to MISSION FOCUS, Box 370, Elkhart, IN 46515.

and the subsequent Spanish penetration of the coast and lowland areas. In the present century these influences increasingly disturbed the Guaymi until in 1961 there arose a prophetess with a new religious movement that offered an answer to their problems. Delia Atencio, a young woman, had visions of the Virgin Mary and her "husband," Jesus Christ, coming up out of the Fonseca River with a secret message for the Guaymi. God had given them five years in which to obey him, by withdrawing from the disturbing Latino (Western) contacts and goods; by following a strict moral code including rejection of polygamy, alcohol, traditional festivals, and fighting; by working hard and following the new religious forms she taught them. "Churches" met in houses with "preachers" for prayers, open-air meetings took place around a cross, and Saturday was to be a rest day. If they did all this faithfully, God would suddenly bring a new paradisiacal life to the Guaymi with happiness and prosperity. They called her "Mama Chi," and her movement spread to over twenty thousand Guaymi before her death in 1964. The movement has since gone through various phases, some more political and some renewing the religious emphasis. There has also been a degree of accommodation to modern ways, such as acceptance of formal schooling.

Even this brief and over-simplified outline reveals that here we have a new religious movement that differs from the old primal religion, that could not be called Christian in the sense of an independent Guaymi church, but which nevertheless clearly reveals a profound interaction with the Christian faith. However confused is the understanding of this faith, salvation for the Guaymi with a revitalized tribal existence is to come from this direction and not from the old spirit world. Even this somewhat exotic movement (from our sober viewpoint) is now part of the Christian story. We have to ask what it means for us who have been given a clearer grasp of the gospel.

Just as there is great variety among these new movements, so many terms have been used to describe them: independent churches, prophet movements, separatist or syncretist sects, millennial or messianic cults, nativistic, revitalization, or adjustment movements, and (especially in Melanesia) cargo cults. They are to be found on all continents.

Across four centuries and all continents

The earliest recorded movement is probably a messianic one that appeared in Guatemala in 1530, soon after interaction with the Christianity carried by the Spaniards. Since then perhaps a hundred movements could be identified in Central and South America, up to the recent Mama Chi movement in Panama and the ongoing Hallelujah religion that began last century among the Akawaio Indians in the interior of Guyana. Of special interest to Mennonites is the independent Pentecostal movement among the Toba Indians of the Argentine Chaco area that has been the subject of a doctoral study by Elmer S. Miller and an earlier report by William D. Reyburn. Although the Toba response to missions, from the Jesuits to the Mennonites, had been minimal, about the middle of this century they began to develop their own Pentecostal form of Christianity through what they had picked up from churches of this kind in the cities along the Parana River. The Toba churches have much singing and praying, some dancing, an emphasis upon baptism which is connected with healing but not upon the Lord's Supper, acceptance of the authority of the Bible, and a rigorous ethic which rejects the use of alcohol.

In North America over a hundred movements could be named, including the oldest ongoing movement of this kind to be found anywhere in the world—the Indian Church of the Narragansett people in Rhode Island which has continued ever since the 1740s. We shall look more fully at the North American movements in the third section of this essay, although this will not include the churches of the black population on the North American mainland. These have been more assimilated into the Christian faith and Western culture than have those of their kinfolk in the Caribbean and along the Atlantic coast of South America where we find a host of Afro-American movements. Those range from George Liele's Native Baptist Church in Jamaica from the 1780s through Jamaica's Pocomania, Revivalists, Rastafarians, and many others to the Spiritual Baptists and Shouters of Trinidad, Santeria in Cuba, the Jordonite Church in Guyana, the Maria Lionza cult in Venezuela, and the host of Afro-Brazilian cults and their many derivatives and developments in Brazil.

Similar movements are much rarer in Europe and Asia, although earlier this century a "Big Candle" movement developed among the Cheremis, a tribal people of European Russia. There have been some examples among the tribal peoples (non-Hinduized) of India, Burma, southeast Asia, and Indonesia. Since Japan's new religions have not arisen among the few really tribal peoples such as the Ainu, we do not include them in our category. On the other hand, Korean folk religion is close to the primal religions. We can take account of some of the two hundred new religions that have appeared there since the mid-nineteenth century, including the Unification Church of Sun Myung Moon. The greatest Asian development has been, as might be expected, in the most Christianized Asian country, the Philippines. Movements began there early in the Spanish period and today could not be counted, although over five hundred could probably be identified in the last two centuries. The largest is now the Iglesia ni Cristo (Church of Christ) which was launched in 1914 in the belief that the early church had been restored to God's chosen nation, now the Filipinos; today it is a wealthy centralized organization with upwards of a million members and the most impressive and distinctive church buildings, a strong discipline, a literal biblical interpretation, and a unitarian theology.

In the island world of the Pacific, movements appeared soon after the advent of the missionaries. Today there are striking examples in Fiji (such as the Congregation of the Poor), and others in New Zealand besides the Ratana Church. In Vanuatu (formerly the New Hebrides) the attempted secession by one section last year, at the time of independence, appeared in the world's press but with almost no mention of the new religious semi-Christian movement that lay behind this and will continue beyond the political action. The few movements among Australian aborigines contrasts with their abundance in Melanesia, with some hundreds of small and short-lived cargo cults and other movements of longer standing. The cargo consists of Western goods which will arrive by supernatural means, together with the ancestors, to inaugurate a new era of human happiness and fulfillment where Melanesians will be accepted as equal with all other people—provided the new rites and code of conduct are faithfully followed.

Black Africa, however, claims the most extensive development of these movements to be found. They start back in the seventeenth century after Portuguese missions had been at work in the old Kingdom of the Kongo, but the Christian community and the prophet movements had all

vanished in the eighteenth century. As a consequence of the great missionary work of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, Black Africa has been emerging as a great Christian cultural area that may yet surpass all others for numbers and vitality. One aspect of this vitality is seen in the vast proliferation of new religious movements of all kinds, but especially of the independent form. Estimates range as high as ten thousand movements with perhaps ten million members. Over three thousand movements with over three million adherents are claimed for South Africa alone. The Kimbanguist Church has some three million members over the various countries to which it has spread in central Africa. These movements form an extensive and significant sector of the growing Christian community in Africa, insofar as they may be called churches. Even the other forms represent a profound Christian influence upon the primal religions and societies of Africa. We shall explore the African developments further.

A four-part classification

We may conclude this general survey by looking more closely at the variety of forms we have been mentioning. The spectrum of movements runs from those which are nearest to the original primal religion and which seek to revitalize it by a reworking in the light of Christian influence, perhaps with some specific Christian borrowings. These movements I call **neo-primal**. Their intention is to remodel the traditional or primal religion, and they may be strongly opposed to the Christian faith. At the same time they may have replaced the traditional gods and spirits by a single supreme and saving God who makes moral demands upon us and actively participates in life in this world.

The next form along the spectrum may be called **synthesist**. Here the intention is to identify with neither the traditional primal faith nor with the new Christian form, but to create a new synthesis by drawing from both these sources. With considerable creativity there may appear a quite new mix that is already a long way from the original tribal tradition.

Still further away from the tribal starting point we find movements that have effected a radical transference from the primal faith into the world of the Bible—especially into that of the Old Testament. Since these reject the Christian Church, and usually the New Testament; since they have no recognizable understanding of Jesus Christ as divine and as risen savior, they cannot be called independent churches. Their faith seems to correspond to the prophetic religion of Israel, and some of these groups actually call themselves Israelites and believe that they are descendants of the ancient Israelites, especially of the lost ten tribes. These movements may be called **Hebraist**; the main Maori movements in New Zealand seem to be of this kind.

Finally there are those which may properly be called **independent churches**. They intend to be Christian, they use the Scriptures, they make something central of Jesus Christ and especially of the Holy Spirit. They may even regard themselves as having become more Christian than the missions and their connected older churches. In Africa, where this form predominates, they may be described as having been founded in Africa by Africans for Africans to worship God in African ways and to meet African needs as Africans themselves feel them—not as others think they ought to feel them. The same process of complete indigenization may be identified in the independent churches of other cultural areas, although it is hard to know what is happening in the independent churches among North

American Indians, for so little is known about them.

Some common features

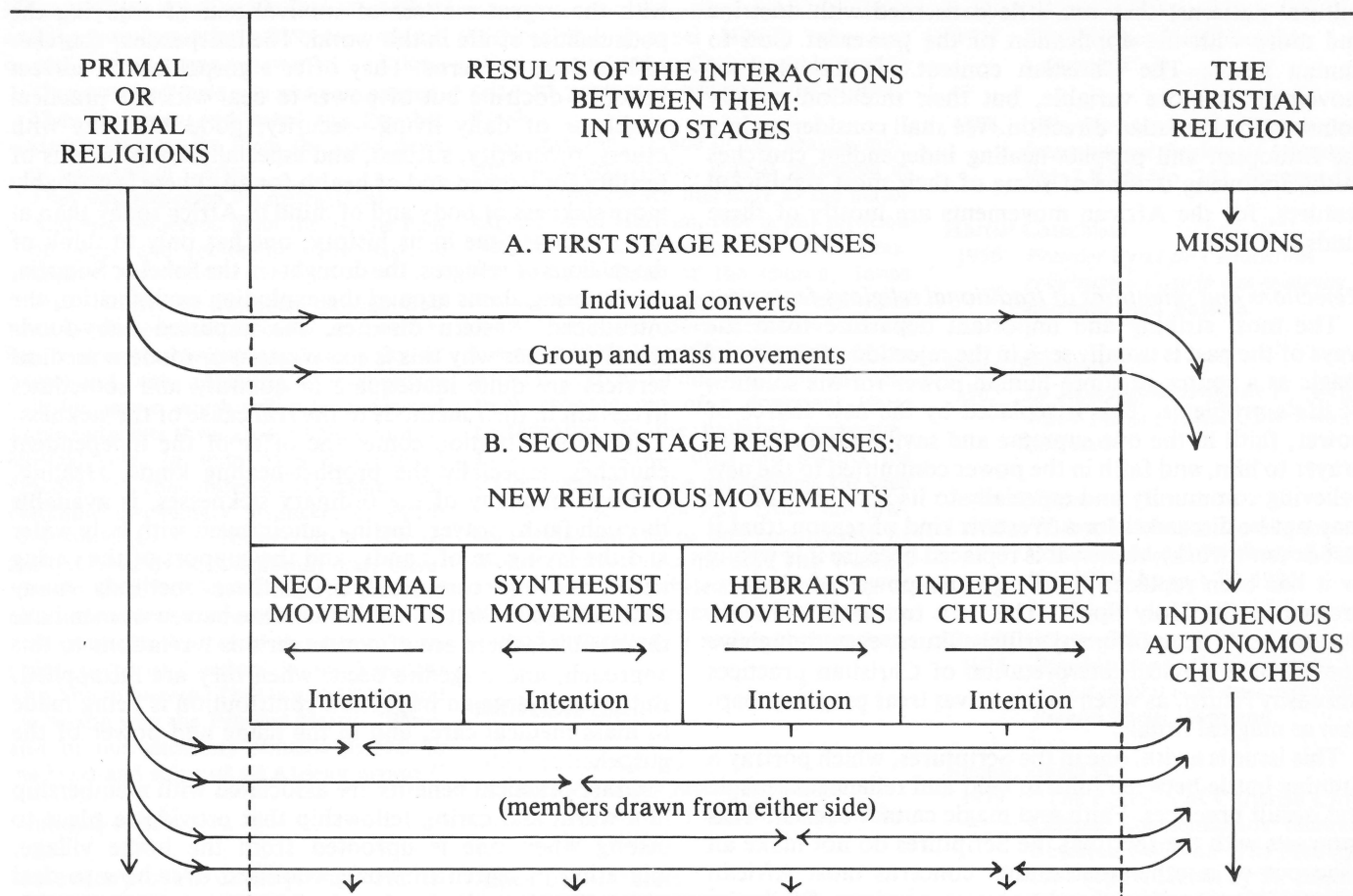
Despite this great variety of religious intention and of religious content, many features of another kind are commonly shared by these movements around the world. While some founders are non-charismatic leaders with gifts of organization rather than of inspiration, many others claim to have had some mystic experience of communication with the spirit world—through a dream or vision or by dying and passing to the spirit realm or heaven. They have been commissioned by God or by heavenly beings to bring a new religion to their people. They have then returned to earth to found the new religion. This basis in divine revelation is central to the most dynamic forms of religion and carried with it great authority for the founder.

A striking feature is the extent to which women or young men have appeared as founders in societies that were traditionally dominated by older men. The new religion usually involves other dramatic rejections of certain traditional practices, especially of any further reliance upon the ancestors, shamans, medicine bags, magic objects, traditional rituals, and divinities. The latter may be demoted or classed as evil, and replaced by one supreme personal deity who demands a reformed way of life. This new ethic is often of rigorous cast, with insistence upon peace and love, sexual discipline (but not necessarily monogamy), industriousness, and the avoidance of alcohol and tobacco. This ethic is supported by new rituals, new sacred songs often with drumming and dancing, new symbolisms and forms of worship that may show great creativity and reflect both the religious traditions involved. New organizations of a voluntary type appear—with many officers, ranks, and uniforms—as the framework for a new community in place of the disrupted traditional order. Within all these structures a new religious blessing is offered—healing and revelations from the spirit world, protection from evil powers, and the promise of the coming of a new order of freedom and prosperity.

In these ways tribal peoples who have been confused, frustrated, powerless, or disintegrating, are given new hope, self-respect, and dignity in face of the dominant white society. This contributes to the survival of a threatened tribal society and to its long-term accommodation to the processes of development and modernization. Insofar, however, as the promises made are unrealistic, or the ecstatic worship becomes an escape from practical action instead of an inspiration for it, the new movements may be of no more than temporary benefit, or even harmful. In either case they should be understood as authentic new religious forms of considerable extent and importance across the world of tribal cultures.

New religious movements among the peoples of Black Africa

As we have already indicated, the modern African Christian community stretches well beyond the Christians connected with missions and the churches these have founded. It embraces millions in what are somewhat loosely called the independent African churches. In general, the longer there has been a Christian presence in any area, the larger the number of independent churches. Each of these amounts to a separate denomination with its own structures and membership. While the Kimbanguists may be numbered in



THE VARIOUS INTERACTIONS BETWEEN CHRISTIANITY AND THE TRIBAL RELIGIONS

millions, and others in hundreds of thousands, many consist of a small group of congregations or even a lone congregation with its own name and identity. Some of the larger ones have been admitted to the World Council of Churches or to national Christian councils, but certain caution should apply to the recognition of all these movements as **churches** in a Christian and theological sense. The majority, however, may be accepted, at least provisionally, on the basis that they intend to be Christian; they understand themselves as African forms of Christianity founded by prophets and leaders who have been given them by the God of the Scriptures.

We must remember that the other forms given in our classification system above are also found in Africa. There are Hebraist movements such as the "Israelites" of South Africa, the Bayudaya (People of Judah) in Uganda who are in fellowship with world Jewry, and the God's Kingdom Society in Nigeria which, as its name suggests, derives from Jehovah's Witnesses. Then there are the synthesist movements that deliberately attempt a fusion of traditional primal religion and Christian elements, such as the Bwiti cult in Gabon and the Déima cult in Ivory Coast. Beyond these, at the other end of the spectrum, are the neo-primal movements attempting to renew traditional religions under some Christian influence: for example, the Dina ya Msambwa Religion of the Ancestors in Kenya, and Godianism in Nigeria which replaces both the Christian God and the gods of the primal religions by a new "God of Africa" who, it is alleged, first revealed himself in Egypt several millennia ago.

Among the independent churches themselves, a further division is usually made into two types that might not be so readily distinguished in other parts of the world. The first refers to the kind of independent church that began to appear around the 1880s in South Africa and in Nigeria by secession from missions in order to secure a spiritually independent and more African religious community. These are referred to as Ethiopian because many of them used this term in their names, or looked to the ancient independent Kingdom of Ethiopia (as it then was) as a model of Christian independence on African soil, supporting this with emphasis upon the biblical references to Ethiopians. These churches usually resemble the church or mission from which they departed, both in doctrine and forms of worship, but are more African in certain cultural matters such as the retention of polygamy.

The other type is the Zionist which takes its name from the more syncretistic movements in South Africa which often use this term in their own titles. These in turn have taken the word from the Bible and from an American mission that was influential in South Africa early in this century, the Christian Catholic Apostolic Church founded by John Alexander Dowie with headquarters at Zion, Illinois. It is better to describe this second type by a term less confined to South Africa and to call them prophet-healing churches. They depend much on revelations from the Holy Spirit through prophets and upon the power of the Spirit to guide and heal; in these ways they resemble the Pentecostal and divine-healing movements in Western countries. Their forms of worship owe much to African

cultural patterns; they are little concerned with doctrine and more with the application of the power of God to human needs. The Christian content of this kind of movement is more variable, but their intention usually points in the Christian direction. We shall consider mainly the Ethiopian and prophet-healing independent churches in the following outline of some of their most significant features, for the African movements are mostly of these kinds.

Rejections and retentions of traditional religious features

The most striking and important departure from the ways of the past is usually seen in the rejection of the use of magic as a source of supra-human power for the solution of life's problems. This is replaced by the new source of power, faith in the one supreme and saving God, faith in prayer to him, and faith in the power committed to the new believing community and especially to its prophets. Magic may not be discarded for a Western kind of reason (that it just doesn't work); rather, it is replaced because it is wrong or it has been replaced by the greater power of God expressed in the Holy Spirit. This is a tremendous breakthrough in African or in any tribal culture, even though we know that a magical interpretation of Christian practices can easily return, as when we ourselves treat prayer or baptism as magical rituals.

This issue is a vital one in the Scriptures, which portray a running battle between faith in God and reliance on magic and occult practices. Faith and magic cannot coexist. This contrasts with the fact that the Scriptures do not make an issue out of another matter that concerns most African cultures, the practice of polygamous marriage. While the Christian norm of monogamy is apparent from the earliest chapters of the Book of Genesis, some of the main characters in the Bible were clearly polygamous; monogamy is never made a condition for admission to the People of God. Whether earlier Christian missions should have done so is another question, but for many independent churches this is not the first priority, which lies in the area of magic rather than of marriage. For Westerners to understand and accept this demands a considerable revision of the priorities we bring to African or other cultures.

Another cultural retention we find hard to take seriously is the belief in revelation from God coming through dreams and visions. For us dreams tend to be viewed either as trivial and of no great consequence or as pathological—as signs of the unresolved problems and tensions in our lives, as data for a psychoanalyst. For most non-Western cultures, dreams have always been potential means of revelation from the spirit world, and this is clear in many African movements. The movement itself may have begun through a dream or vision of the founder, which is now the divine charter for the church as having come from God. The prophets and members may lay great stress on dreams, but not, be it noted, quite uncritically. One must “discern the spirits” and realize that not all dreams are the voice of the Holy Spirit; hence various ways of checking and interpreting dreams may be found in operation. Again these independent churches have the Bible on their side, for dreams have played a conspicuous part as a means of revealing the will of God at a large number of important junctures in the scriptural story. Perhaps we Westerners have something to relearn here.

Practical religious blessings

African peoples are pragmatic in outlook, concerned

with the urgent matters of survival and of enjoying the potentialities of life in this world. The independent churches reflect these concerns. They offer a gospel not of correct belief or doctrine but of power to deal with the practical problems of daily living—security, good relations with others, prosperity, success, and especially the problems of fertility for women and of health for all. There is probably more sickness of body and of mind in Africa today than at any previous time in its history; one has only to think of the millions of refugees, the droughts in the Sahel or Somalia, the festering slums around the exploding capital cities, the introduced Western diseases, the imported baby-foods scandals to see why this is so. Western or modern medical services are quite inadequate in quantity and sometimes irrelevant in their methods to the real cause of the sickness.

Into this situation comes the offer of the independent churches, especially the prophet-healing kinds. Healing, at least for many of the ordinary sicknesses, is available through faith, prayer, fasting, anointment with holy water and the laying on of hands, and the support of the caring and believing community. By these methods many Africans secure better health and some barren women have their babies; there are of course serious limitations to this approach, and tragedies occur when they are misapplied. But by and large an important contribution is being made to mass medical care, and in the name and power of the gospel.

Other practical benefits are associated with membership in a warm and caring fellowship that provides a place to belong when one is uprooted from the home village, migrating in search of work, confused over how to deal with officials and government departments or in trouble with the police, harassed by enemies, or simply bewildered and strained by the political uncertainties and great social changes found in most African countries. The power and guidance of the Holy Spirit, mediated by the pastoral care of the small and intimate local congregation and its prophet minister, are getting through to the individual in a way that may not have been experienced in one of the larger and more impersonal older churches.

Reformations, moral and religious

Most of these movements insist that the practical blessings depend also upon obedience to a certain code of conduct. This replaces the tribal codes which have been eroded by social upheavals and cannot apply effective sanctions in populations that are increasingly mobile and mixed. The new code is usually congruent with a Christian ethic and often takes a rigorous and puritan form, especially in prohibiting the use of alcohol and tobacco. This is a major contribution to African health and also to the reduction of the social problems deriving from alcohol. Most churches have a simple style of church dress, usually a white prayer gown, and this counters the tendency to ostentatious clothes display sometimes seen in the older churches. The independents in central Africa outside the tropical rain forests may also repudiate the use of church buildings with the opportunities for elaboration and display and expensive ornaments and organs that these provide. Taken together it is possible to detect the beginnings of an indigenous ascetic ethic which is a vital Christian necessity in cultures dominated by models of bigness, power, and success. No Westerners can introduce this ascetic component, for we remain unavoidably affluent and powerful in comparison with the mass of African people; the independent churches may prove to be

highly significant in this dimension.

Many of them also feel that they are reforming Western or mission Christianity which has lost its power and does not rely upon the Holy Spirit. They are recovering the earlier true forms of Christianity given by God and seen in the Scriptures. By contrast we have only the more man-made churches of the pope, Luther, Calvin, John Wesley, or even Menno Simons! It is difficult to deny some truth in these claims, and it is clear that these movements are reforming their Christianity out of the Western modes that we have given to Africa and into more indigenous and African ways of worship and proclaiming the gospel.

At the same time we can detect heresies both old and new in the beliefs and practices of some of the independent churches. This itself is a sign of vitality, for dead churches don't produce heresies. These aberrations, especially those which are newly developed in Africa, should provide grist to the mill of African theologians as they work towards the much-discussed Black Theology for African Christians.

Missionary nature of the independent churches

Some of these churches remain small and local, attracting their members by the practical benefits they offer. Others develop into large churches but remain within one tribe, as Shembe's Nazarite Church among the Zulus of Natal. Others show a remarkable capacity to spread widely, crossing barriers of tribe, language, culture, and national boundaries and achieving a wide geographical extension. Thus the Kimbanguist Church operates in some six or seven central African countries; the Zionists of South Africa have spread into Mozambique, Swaziland, Botswana, Zimbabwe, and Zambia; and the small Church of the Lord (Aladura) which began in Nigeria in the 1930s now has branches in four other West African nations and several congregations in England. This is achieved without benefit of mission societies or boards and without what we would call missionaries set aside for the task. Since primal religions are characteristically non-missionary, this is a quite new feature, this universal outlook transcending tribal and national boundaries; it is also a valuable counterforce to the divisive tendencies of tribe and nationalism that are of serious concern in Africa, as well as a testimony to the authentic nature of the faith these churches profess. Some indeed are convinced that they have a great spiritual contribution to make to the whole world, including the white Christians. Who can easily say them nay?

Contributions to development and modernization

Insufficient attention is paid to the fact that the development of the Third World is more than a technical and economic matter; it demands a basic change in the culture of a people, in its values, motivations, and goals, in its world view. The independent churches are doing this for their members insofar as they are being drawn into the world view of the Bible, and we can identify two important areas in which this is happening. We have already noted the turning away from magic, and this opens the way for reliance upon a more rational, scientific, and realistic approach to human development. It is impossible to modernize while relying upon magical methods. Nor is it possible to develop a new future, different from and better than the past, in societies whose outlook is backward looking and governed by the patterns and values expressed in the myths that relate them to their origins. To move into the biblical world view is to take history seriously, to see God at work in one's past history and to look for the great

things he has for us in our future history. The future is something new, and potentially better, for which we must work in obedience to God. It is not tied to the levels and patterns of the past; it is not, as for most tribal societies, simply more of the same. A world view that shifts from magic to science and incorporates the historical dimension is necessary for any real development in the modern sense. This is something that the independent churches are helping to bring in African societies.

We have noted the new possibilities they open for leadership by young men and by women, the new "places to belong" provided for de-tribalized and uprooted people, and the contributions to health and to a simpler lifestyle. The independents also represent the multiplication of voluntary societies, and hence of a religiously plural and free society over against the monolithic and absolutist tendencies of modern African states. Some of them have encouraged the development of low-technology industries and have achieved considerable economic advance without any outside aid or guidance. In this they have been assisted by their own outlook which resembles the Protestant work ethic. Their world view also encourages the taking of individual responsibility for one's future instead of blaming the hostility of others, especially of witches and sorcerers, for one's misfortunes or lack of progress. In all these and in other ways the independent churches are assisting in this basic change from the old to the new world view that must underlie all real development.

Relations with missions and the older churches

We have already pointed out that these new movements form part of the Christian story, and that a few have been admitted to Christian councils. Although they have been ignored, despised, or even persecuted by the older Christian bodies in the past, attitudes are now changing and missions and churches are beginning to explore relationships with these independent offspring and asking both how we can help them and what they may have to teach us. American Mennonites have pioneered with distinction in this sensitive realm ever since Edwin and Irene Weaver were sent in response to an unsolicited invitation from a group of bush churches in Eastern Nigeria in 1959. They met a situation unique in the experience of their mission board. How they adjusted to it is told in *The Uyo Story* (now out of print). Weavers followed this with *From Kuku Hill* (available from University Microfilms International, Ann Arbor, Michigan) when the Nigerian civil war had been instrumental in their having to move to Ghana where they had initiated similar relations with Ghanaian independent churches. They and other Mennonites have now worked with independent churches in Ivory Coast, Benin, Zaire, Botswana, Lesotho, and Swaziland so that we have a substantial fund of Mennonite experience upon which to draw.

Elsewhere Canadian Baptists have worked within a movement in Kenya, and in Nairobi the Coptic Orthodox Church of Egypt has a bishop set aside for work with independent churches; likewise the Church Missionary Society of England has a missionary there working in a low-key and long-range way. In Zaire the Kimbanguist seminary has been staffed by teachers from many expatriate sources; Egyptian Copts, Moravians, Mennonites, Swiss Reformed have all contributed. A notable one-man pioneering work was established in Zimbabwe early in the 1970s by Afrikaner Martinus Daneel, and the ensuing conference of independent churches now maintains the train-

ing courses he began. In South Africa there have been several attempts at providing the independents with ministerial training institutions, either helping them to found their own or admitting their students to the seminaries of the older churches such as the Lutheran seminary at Mapumulo.

From all these efforts, and from others that could be added, there has been some success, some failure, but sufficient encouragement to show that a whole new field of responsibility and opportunity has opened before us. Insofar as the apprehension of the gospel in these bodies is confused, distorted, or heretical, the task is a missionary one of a new and delicate nature for we are dealing with those who believe they have already made a proper response to the gospel. Insofar as these churches intend to be Christian and are recognizably so to some degree, the opportunity is an ecumenical one, a call for fellowship and help from the more privileged part of the Christian world. In spite of the treatment they may have received in the past there is remarkably little bitterness towards the older churches and missions, and they recognize that Western missionaries brought the gospel to Africa and so to the independents themselves. Although rejoicing that God has shown that he deals with his African people directly, and not only through Europe and America, there is a great desire for recognition and acceptance by Western Christians. There is an openness to receive help, especially in Bible study and ministerial training, from people like us.

New religious movements among the Indians of North America

Elsewhere I have described the religious situation among the Indians of North America in the following terms: these people were (1) *as fine a race and* (2) *made as good an initial response to the Christian faith as any other tribal peoples;* (3) *their subsequent treatment by whites was as bad as anywhere else, but* (4) *their survival qualities have been unexcelled in the tribal world;* (5) *they have been the object of Christian missions for a period as long as that of any other people in modern times, and yet* (6) *the overall Christian results are among the least impressive of all mission labours* (Turner, *Missiology*, 1973:47). One has only to compare what has happened in the last hundred years in Black Africa with the outcome of over four centuries of white contact and Christian missions in North America.

It is especially important therefore to examine any other responses that the American Indians have made to their contact with the Christian faith. When we look for new religious movements like those in other tribal peoples we find that the Indian peoples, in proportion to their quite limited numbers, have been just as innovative and creative as those in other parts of the world. Since Christian missions began so much earlier here than in Africa and Oceania, it is not surprising to find in the USA the three oldest continuing new religious movements in the world.

Three of the oldest ongoing movements in the world

The first of these, the Narragansett Indian Church at Charlestown, Rhode Island, has already been mentioned, but we know little of what has happened to the Christian faith with which it began in the 1740s. An American colleague of mine has now begun to inquire into this history and how this church has helped to preserve tribal identity amid the engulfing white society.

The second oldest such movement is the Yaqui Church in Arizona and northern Mexico. By the eighteenth century the Yaqui people had been converted by Jesuit missionaries in their Mexican homeland, but when the Jesuit Order was suppressed in the 1760s the Yaquis were left without further Western or Christian contact. They have maintained their own churches ever since. In the present century the Yaqui have moved to Arizona in search of work and established settlements near Phoenix and Tucson, each with its white Latin American style church building facing onto an open plaza. Anthropologists, especially Professor E.H. Spicer of Tucson, have studied the Yaqui exhaustively from the dramas portraying the Yaqui understanding of the events of Easter Week. Now an American student, a doctoral candidate at Aberdeen, is exploring the more religious and Christian inner content of these Yaqui churches that have maintained an independent existence for over two centuries.

The third of these long-continuing movements goes back to 1799 when Ganioda'yo, a Seneca chief in advanced stages of alcoholism, received visions of three heavenly beings during a trance and was transformed as a result of their messages. In 1800 he established a new religious way that in turn transformed the demoralized Seneca and has become known as the Handsome Lake religion (this is the literal English translation of his name) or the Longhouse religion among the Iroquois tribes. The Christian beliefs came primarily from Ganioda'yos Quaker contacts and included a personal Creator-Ruler, a devil, heaven, hell, and judgment; Jesus was identified with a local mythological figure. Traditional Seneca divinities remained as ruling angels, the old rituals were transformed into four dance-feasts, and the longhouse building was remodeled as a church. Ganioda'yo strongly attacked witchcraft and the use of alcohol and banned further sales of land to whites. Thus he encouraged the men to turn from hunting to agricultural and animal farming and stressed the importance of a stable nuclear family, contributing to the survival and modernization of the Seneca.

His teaching was widely accepted among the other Iroquois tribes and after his death in 1815 became embodied in what is known as the Code of Handsome Lake—a body of material maintained in oral form until written down and published much later by white scholars. This code is still recited every two years over a period of several days by authorized preachers, and is equivalent to their own Scriptures. Today some ten longhouses are to be found on Iroquois reservations in upper New York State, Ontario, and Quebec with about four or five thousand adherents of this new religion. The religion is now so well established that its members identify it with the original Iroquois faith in spite of the fact that it is probably an example of our new synthesisist category. While this religion is not anti-white, it has served to maintain Indian cultural ways and Indian identity in a manner substantially influenced by Christianity for nearly two centuries.

The variety of later movements

There have been many other prophets and movements, mostly smaller in scale and shorter in life, reaching back to a number of Delaware prophets in the eighteenth century of whom the best known is Tenskwatawa, brother of the outstanding Shawnee leader Tecumseh. He rejected shamanism, magic, and the traditional healing methods, together with the religion of the whites, and advocated a new and strict morality in what we might classify as a neo-

primal movement. Among the Kickapoo the prophet Kennekuk led a notable modernizing and reform movement from 1827 till he died in 1852; a Kennekuk remnant survives in a single congregation near Horton in Kansas.

In the West were the churches of Smohalla, a remarkable leader among the Wanapum, and of prophet Luls among the Umatilla. The best known is probably the Ghost Dance, another neo-primal movement, which arose from prophet-dreamers among the Northern Paiute. These dreamers received instructions for round dances and songs during their vision encounters with the spirit world, together with a strict moral code of a Christian nature that forbade war against both Indians and whites. Faithful performance of the new rituals and obedience to the new code would hasten the return of their ancestors (hence the term, ghost dance), the removal of the invading whites, the restoration of Indian lands, the return of the vanishing buffalo, and the introduction of a new paradisiacal life. The main Ghost Dance developed in 1889 from a vision experienced by Wovoka in which he died and went to heaven and was sent back with this new message. Indians from many tribes quickly accepted him as a new Indian messiah and the Ghost Dance spread widely in the West from Canada to Texas. In 1890 it reached the Sioux and coincided with the events that led to the Sioux rising (for which it was unjustly blamed), and so to the massacre at Wounded Knee that has become such a symbolic event for Indians. The main movement soon declined, but it still continues in attenuated form among a few tribes. It represents a further neo-primal development that nevertheless prepared for further accommodation to white culture and the Christian faith.

Another movement which began about the same time and is just a century old this year is the synthesist Indian Shaker Church, which has nothing to do with the Quakers or the Annie Lee Shakers of New England. John Slocum, a baptized Catholic and ne'er-do-well logger, also visited heaven during a coma in 1881 and received the commission to preach a new religion for his Squaxon people around Olympia. A shaking paroxysm of his wife Mary was understood as the work of the Holy Spirit healing John from an illness in 1882, and from such beginnings the Shaker Church was founded. Its major changes have been to abandon healing through traditional shamans in favor of spiritual healing through prayer, dance, and shaking rites, and to introduce such Christian elements as the Trinity, Sunday worship (but no Christian sacraments or festivals), and plain churches with a prayer table or altar, handbells, and many crosses. Direct revelations have replaced the Bible, except for one group of Shakers who cooperate with white evangelists and show the direction in which the rest might yet move. Over twenty congregations with perhaps some two thousand adherents may be found in wooden churches from northern California to southern British Columbia. Earlier in the century, "authorities" on Indian missions treated it in a derogatory manner and predicted that it would soon vanish; in 1971 I saw them building a nice new church in Washington State. Some may wish they would just go away, along with all other such unwanted offspring of our coming, but they don't.

We could survey further movements, including some commencing this century such as the Holy Ground religion founded by Silas John Edwards among the Apaches in New Mexico in 1921. It has survived the imprisonment of its founder for thirty years until 1954 and is probably to be described as synthesist through its mixed symbolism and

ritual, its absorption of Jesus into traditional myths, and its emphasis upon morality and one personal God.

Peyote cult or Native American Church

The largest new religious movement in the Americas must, however, receive much of the remaining space, for it is the oldest and most widespread of all the pan-Indian movements, political or otherwise, spanning over fifty tribes and numbering scores of thousands of members. This is the controversial peyote cult that developed into the Native American Church.

Peyote is a carrot-shaped cactus with button-like growths on top that contain mescaline which has been important in some primal religions of northern Mexican Indians for healing and visions. When this practice spread to the plains Indians over a hundred years ago it was transformed into a new cult combining Indian and Christian elements in varying degrees, regarding itself as the true form of Christianity for the Indian peoples. Peyote is personified as the Peyote Spirit and regarded either as the Indian equivalent of Jesus or as Jesus himself. When the peyote buttons are eaten in a ritual setting, or made into a tea, they produce mystical visions given by the Peyote Spirit; this revelation replaces that of the Bible, which is usually left to the whites. Peyote consumption is also the Indian alternative to the Lord's Supper of white Christians.

While peyote is hallucinogenic, or vision producing, it is not a narcotic habit-forming drug as most people have mistakenly believed. It also has one property that is of major importance in the Indian situation—it does not consort with the taking of alcohol. The peyote cult or Native American Church, which also has a strong moral emphasis, has therefore provided probably the most effective and widespread antidote for this scourge of the Indian people. This fact alone should make us take it seriously and positively, in contrast to the almost universal and bitter opposition it has received from missions (including the great Mennonite apostle of the Cheyenne, Rudolf Petter), tribal councils, state legislatures, and the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

Since 1914 this movement has slowly been gaining religious freedom through legal incorporation in some states, through winning appeals in higher courts against some of the fifteen states that had banned it, and through the support of the anthropologists who alone seem to have participated enough in the life and worship of this movement to understand it from the inside. Christians, along with most others, have been plainly wrong in their interpretation and evaluation of the Native American Church, although again I would call it synthesist rather than an independent church. I know of only one white Christian who has established rapport with the peyotists and has been invited to say a Christian prayer during attendance at their Saturday all-night worship; he is a Catholic missionary in South Dakota, Paul Steinmetz, whose recent doctoral work has now been published.

Independent Indian churches

Fr. Steinmetz also provides one of the few published accounts of one of the Indian independent churches that would correspond to those in Africa. This is the Body of Christ Church among the Sioux, emerging from a Catholic background about 1960. Lack of literature on this kind of movement, which has not caught the attention of anthropologists and others, means at present we know little

about what could be the sector where our responsibilities and opportunities are greatest. We have mentioned the Narragansett's Church (if this term should prove to be the appropriate one). In recent times many others have appeared—among the Seminoles in Florida (stemming from Baptist and other work), among the Pimas, Mohaves, San Carlos Apaches, Navahos, in many of the Oklahoma peoples especially the Creeks (again often Baptist in form), and in some of the great cities.

Two are of special interest to Mennonites. The Hopi Independent Church was founded when Fred Johnson, a local Hopi pastor, seceded from the General Conference Mennonite work in 1946 and began his own church in a garage at New Oraibi; this was later replaced by the present stone church with dining facilities. The Hotevilla Gospel Church arose in the most traditional of all the Hopi villages in 1970 when Daniel Quimayousie asked to become independent of the General Conference Mennonite Church in order to work more effectively within his own village.

In contrast to their African counterparts, these Indian churches usually maintain a low profile and may operate in remote areas. It is difficult to draw the line between those fully independent in origin and those emerging from a mission context or under the influence of whites with whom they maintain a tenuous connection. This seems to be happening with the Southwest Indian Bible Conference, a conference center at Prescott belonging to a group of independent churches in Arizona. I believe there is also some connection between the General Conference Mennonite Church and the Indian Bible Church in Denver whose history was sketched in a brief document by Anna Baerg in 1974. This connection with white Christians seems more extensive than among the African independents, and one wonders if this helps to explain the apparent lack of Indianized forms of worship as compared with the extensive Africanization in the other case.

We may feel that North American Indians have not yet produced an active, self-supporting, and genuinely indigenous church, even after many centuries of white and Christian contact. The Indians appear listless, passive, beaten, or—in more recent activist circles—merely angry and militant. If we cannot avoid such impressions, we do well to remember these other new religious movements with their vitality, long persistence against such opposition, and varied creativeness. If this most spiritually minded people has not yet found full expression in our churches, perhaps they have shown something of their spiritual potential in these other movements. People like us can perhaps help those walking on these two different roads to come closer together.

What do we do about these movements?

Something of our response has been suggested at various points in the above surveys; we can gather these considerations together and develop them a little further in some concluding theses as a basis for our ongoing discussion.

1. An extensive range of new religious movements has been created in modern times in the tribal societies of the world, involving many millions of people and showing great spiritual earnestness and creativity. We are partly responsible for the existence of such movements; they therefore belong to the Christian story.

2. Our responsibilities can be described as both missionary and ecumenical. Many of these movements

amount to a new mission responsibility across the world, while others call for fellowship with some different or unusual (to us) kinds of Christianity—a fellowship in which we should be both givers and receivers. The door is wide open in many countries for us to explore both kinds of responsibility.

3. This new field requires new approaches, new mission policies, and new forms of inter-church aid, because of the special nature of many of these movements as “half-way houses” between the old primal religion and the new Christian faith. There is particular need for Bible teaching, leadership training, assistance in discovering their own history and identity, and encouragement to know more about other new movements of similar nature. Thus they may start an internal critique from one to the other in place of the critiques from Westerners.

4. The expatriate mission agency and missionary have a special responsibility to take the initiative in approaching independent movements, since local churches often feel threatened by these movements or ashamed of them. We who are less involved often have an easier entry, and can encourage the local churches to follow on when the possibilities have been demonstrated, for only they can offer the full local fellowship. (This, of course, does not apply in areas such as the USA or New Zealand, where we ourselves are also the local churches.)

5. Mennonites in particular have a special vocation, already well exhibited, for relationships with these new religious movements. This derives from their own history as a minority with experience of rejection and persecution, from their rural background and simple lifestyle, and from a form of Christianity that is strongly biblical but non-credal.

6. There are no shortcuts or quick and simple methods in the above tasks. Some of those who may be called to this new area of service should acquire the professional competence that is available and be prepared to enter upon a lifelong vocation with as much commitment as those who pioneered in other ways in the past.

Some Reading Suggestions

General

Lanternari, Vittorio

1963 *Religions of the Oppressed* New York: Knopf. A world survey, but with an anti-colonial stance.

Oosterwal, Gottfried

1973 *Modern Messianic Movements* Elkhart, Indiana: Institute of Mennonite Studies. The best general introduction for Christians.

Turner, Harold W.

1973 “A Further Dimension for Missions: New Religious Movements in the Primal Societies,” *International Review of Mission* Vol. LXII, No. 274, July 1973. An introduction to this new mission field.

1974ff “Tribal Religious Movements, New,” *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, Macropaedia. Chicago: Encyclopaedia Britannica, Inc.

Wilson, Bryan R.

1973 *Magic and the Millennium* New York: Harper & Row. Another world survey, with much information, especially on North American movements, but handicapped by an elaborate sociological theory and inability to do justice to the religious dimension.

Africa

Barrett, David B.

- 1968 *Schism and Renewal in Africa* Nairobi and London: Oxford University Press. A stimulating overview with interesting theories.

Sundkler, Bengt

- 1961 *Bantu Prophets in South Africa* London: Oxford University Press. The pioneer work by a Swedish missionary.

Turner, Harold W.

- 1979 *Religious Innovation in Africa* Boston: G. K. Hall & Co. Collected essays covering many aspects of these movements.

North America

Barnett, Homer G.

- 1957 *Indian Shakers* Carbondale and Edwardsville, Illinois: Southern Illinois University Press. The major study of the Shaker Church in the Northwest.

Hertzberg, Hazel W.

- 1971 *The Search for an American Indian Identity: Modern Pan-Indian Movements* Syracuse, New York: Syracuse University Press. Chapters 10 and 11 especially deal with peyote and the Native American Church.

Marriott, Alice, and Carol K. Rachlin

- 1971 *Peyote* New York: Crowell. A good popular survey based on intimate experience.

Mooney, James

- 1965 *The Ghost Dance Religion* Chicago: Phoenix Books. An abridged edition of an 1896 classic. Contains early studies of the Indian Shaker Church and other movements.

Spicer, Edward H.

- 1962 *Cycles of Conquest: The Impact of Spain, Mexico, and the United States on Indians of the Southwest* Tucson: University of Arizona Press. A major study of Indians of the Southwest, including the Yaqui and Mayo churches, the Holy Ground religion, and others in chapter 17.

Steiner, Stan

- 1968 *The New Indians* New York: Harper & Row, and Dell Publishing (Delta Books). Note especially chapter 8, "The Christ Who Never Came."

Steinmetz, Paul B.

- 1980 *Pipe, Bible and Peyote among the Oglala Lakota* Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell. From the doctoral dissertation of an American Jesuit missionary in South Dakota, and highly recommended for the Native American Church and also an independent Indian church. Only this work and that of Steiner above include the latter form, on which there is little literature.

Turner, Harold W.

- 1973 "Old and New Religions Among North American Indians," *Missiology: An International Review* Vol. 1, No. 2. The sad mission situation and the new movements.

Wallace, Anthony F.

- 1970 *The Death and Rebirth of the Seneca* New York: Knopf. A definitive work on the Handsome Lake religion.

An Open Window into the Harrist Church

DAVID A. SHANK

English readers had to wait until 1968 for their first introduction to *L'Eglise Harriste* of the Ivory Coast (Barrett, 1968:176f). Since then several other studies have appeared (Barrett, 1971; Haliburton, 1971, 1975; Walker, 1976, 1977, 1980). The French reading public received its first published study in 1958 (Holas) with several more following since (Amos-Djoro, 1958; Bureau, 1971; Auge, 1975; Piault, 1975; Yando, 1970). Only two of these have offered helpful understandings of the church's life, structure, and thought. All of these are outside observers describing a religious phenomenon for outsiders.

This article presents to English readers a résumé and description of a brochure in French which appeared in May 1980 entitled (in translation) *The Harrist Facing His Religion* (Aké, 1980). Although brief and unpretentious, this apparently insignificant booklet is in fact an important open window

for observing an African religious movement's evolution through the eyes of a participant.

This study reflects the current life of the movement as perceived by a committed participant. Aké addresses it as a challenge to the present literate generation of youth, appealing to them to take seriously their faith, life, and responsibility for the future of the movement. The reader is thus permitted to feel the pulse of the movement—with its strengths and weaknesses—as perceived by one responsible young Harrist.

The author, Alphonse Boyé Aké, who describes himself as having a "Bible Study diploma" (possibly earned through a Bible correspondence course as offered by Christian broadcasters), is a young apostle in the Harrist community at Anono, an Ebrié village several kilometers east of the rapidly expanding capital of the Ivory Coast—Abidjan. Over a period of five years he visited

a number of Harrist communities to study the ways in which his own religion was being practiced. Struck by the great diversity of practice, the author wrote his text in order to make his own "contribution in the search for a uniformisation of the structures of Harrism." It appears to be a personal, unofficial initiative growing out of his concern for the future. At the same time he insists that it is not a plan for new structures nor a document intended for religious instruction; he wants to confront his generation with the reality of Harrist life.

David A. Shank served in Belgium 1950-73 and since 1976 has been assigned to West Africa where he is working with independent churches. Both assignments have been with Mennonite Board of Missions, Elkhart, Indiana. David recently submitted his doctoral thesis on the Prophet William Wadé Harris to Aberdeen University, Scotland.

A history of the Harrist Church

A brief historical section informs the reader that Harrism is a religion founded by the Prophet William Wade Harris who in 1928 transmitted his "power" to Jonas Ahui—the present spiritual head of the church—for the continuation of his work. Numerous other "Successors"—self-designated—are seen to have turned many African faithful believers away from their religion. Among these, the most important was the "clever Methodist Pastor Pierre Benoît who was able to fake with remarkable ingenuity a photograph of the Prophet Harris shaking his hand."

This is obviously the local oral tradition of Anono. A photo does exist showing Harris shaking hands with the French missionary Pierre Benoît in 1926, but it is unquestionably an authentic photo (Shank 1979:211-231). At the same time, one may observe in some Harrist churches a photograph of the Prophet Harris and Jonas Ahui, the head of the Harrist Church. It is composed of the photo from 1926 of Harris and one from the 1950s of Jonas Ahui. It dates apparently from about the time of the appearance of the 1956 catechism. As a composition it could be interpreted as being "faked with considerable ingenuity," although it is no doubt a symbolic representation. When compared with a 1928 photo of Harris and Ahui, Harris is obviously younger and Ahui is obviously much older.

Faithful Harrist believers, however, know the true successor to be His Supreme Eminence Jonas Ahui. Prophet Harris himself is perceived as a mysterious personage but a veritable liberator who delivered the Ivorian masses from ignorance; his "arrival transformed events very much, [for] our grandparents now had their eyes and ears opened." The prophet's mission of 1913 and 1914 is perceived as "teaching the good news of God and of Christ, teaching the word of God and his commandments, and recommending to pray to God and to observe his commandments so that they would one day come out of darkness." This accent upon spiritual liberation—rather than political liberation—is quite striking.

The author's contrast between Harris' true successor and other so-called successors is characteristic of the study as a whole in its effort to clarify authentic Harrism. One discovers a repeated use of the word **true**: true Harrists, true religion, true rich, true poor, true son of God, true freedom of the kingdom of God, true meaning of communion, or a true communicant. This note of authenticity is found elsewhere in expressions like "the deep meaning of Harrism" and "the deep meaning of a collection" and is contrasted with false faithful, bad faith, little faith, false poor, or false rich.

Thus, various attitudes—and levels of faith and practice—of Harrists are pointed out by the author who indicates that all is not as it ought to be; there are many "whose faith in God is fragile and unstable" and others who have no "solid faith in God."

This is related to what the author calls "the present success of the Harrist religion" which he attributes to the African population's attraction to the entertaining character of song and dance; for them Harrism represents "a purely African religion founded by an African for the Africans."

The author sees in the Harrist community those who prayed much in time of suffering but who "abandoned believing in God" once their material, financial, or professional situation was improved. Others who had no problems never thought of going to church; but now that their situation has become clouded, they have attended regularly "perhaps in search of their wealth that has disappeared." The author complains that the Sunday collections are feeble, often due to the fact that "the apostles or others responsible for the treasury squander the church's money." Again, "all the apostles do not properly fulfill the role which is entrusted to them. Certain ones are veritable traitors who participate in the destruction of the Harrist religion."

At another point, the author complains that many Harrists "with little faith" attach more importance to sacrifices ordered by a **marabout** or a fetishist than to those authorized by the church. If he writes accusingly of the Harrist, "it is because we want him to understand his true religion which rigorously forbids these kinds of devilish and fetish practices . . . which worsen his sins much more by his doing them." All of this malpractice calls forth the need to understand what is a true Harrist with true faith.

For the author, true Harrists—in spite of poverty or wealth—would accept with all their soul, heart, and conscience that God is the All-Powerful; they would inherit the peace of God. The Harrist believer must be a *true son of God, who will one day be able to enjoy the true liberty of the Kingdom of God. He must be a model of a faithful servant of God. He must first of all love his religion, be proud to belong to it, and act in such a way that his religion be known and respected. In no case whatsoever must he declare his religion to be the best, as do certain messengers of other religions. He must respect all religions which speak of God. Because it is not by our religion that we will inherit the Kingdom of heaven, but by the clearness of our moral conscience and by the faith which we will have in God, the unique Master of the Universe. The Harrist must be open, straightforward, peaceful, and especially must have faith in God by scrupulously respecting his commandments* (Aké).

These two last paragraphs set the climate in which the booklet is written. Modestly critical, yet indicating a clear positive model, the author wants Harrist readers to "draw the conclusions which are thrust upon them." It is indeed a serious call to a reform of spiritual authenticity and consistency of life based on a deep faith in God.

Rules in the Harrist Church

Structures

What follows is a detailed description of the "Internal Rule" of the Harrist community, codifying a practice which already reflects a consensus and appears as a given which is not subject to change. This is first of all seen in the structures of leadership, organization, and finance. The leaders include the **deans**—or elders—being more than sixty years of age, and who compose the **Council** of the church. Then follow the **apostles** "named like the twelve servants of Christ"; there are usually twelve, but there may be more or less depending on the population of a given locality. The apostles lead the church and consult the deans when "an ultra-important decision is taken." The **preachers**, with their Head Preacher or Superior Preacher with a holy cross-staff as their head, are "the intermediaries between God and the faithful." They are protected by the apostles and are strictly honored and respected because of their heavy responsibility. Alcohol, tobacco, celibacy, and polygamy are forbidden to the preachers, as is their participation in any extra-religious public ceremony. At the same time they are required to be present for any kind of (public) prayer. The three kinds of leaders, like other members of the community, are self-supported—"living from the sweat of their brow."

The rest of the community is organized into various groupings and roles under the supervision of the apostles: the chorus, the guardians or keepers of order, the lighting service or candle-lighters, the bell-ringers, the service of cleaning and upkeep (men for the inside of the church and women for the outside), the maids-of-honor (women between fifteen and thirty-five years of age who welcome visitors with song and dance), the youth, and other members.

The financial structure involves a treasury which is furnished and managed by the collections, gifts given on the occasion of individual prayers, annual thank offerings to the infant Jesus in January, and offerings of thanks to God in July for deliverance from the floods at the end of the rainy season. The major expenses are for vestments for the preachers, material such as candles for prayer, unforeseen trips and travel, expenses for church festivals, receptions for visitors, and church repairs.

Practices

After questions of structure, the Internal Rule then deals in detail with questions of practice. These include, in the following order, patterns of ordering and of religious decorum.

1. The manner of ringing the bell.
2. The manner of going to the church.
3. The manner of entering the church.
4. The manner of praying, carefully prescribed as follows:

- prayer when leaving the preacher's house.
 - each person upon entering the church and finding a place kneels for individual prayer.
 - the first prayer of blessing from the altar.
 - the second prayer, followed by "Our Father."
 - the third prayer, followed by "Our Father."
 - requested prayers for individuals may take place between the third and final prayer, and may be related to the birth of a child; escape from some danger; healing or recovery from sickness; good fortune in money, work, or school; safe travel; or others. At this time, God can be offered a sacrifice such as a box of candles or money which can be placed upon the holy table; but this is optional. There may also be requiem prayers for a member who has ended his mourning after the loss of a family member.
 - a final prayer of thanksgiving followed by "Our Father."
5. The manner of seating at the church in an order related to age groupings, with women on the left facing the altar and men on the right and with chorus members to the front. Only the deans, apostles, and preachers—and, if necessary, men candle-lighters or cleaners—are authorized to "penetrate the altar area where they are seated with the deans on the left and the apostles on the right. It is strictly forbidden for women to penetrate the altar area; nor may a man enter the area who has had sexual relations with a woman during the night preceding a mass."
 6. The manner of going out of the church.
 7. The dress for church. This is white and is intended to eliminate the consciousness of class differences. This was not required by the prophet ("who did not come for these kinds of extra-divine rules") but was a measure taken by the church in the 1950s in order to eliminate clothing differences between the well-to-do and the disadvantaged. Otherwise the church "would lose its value." Black is worn for funeral services, for mourning, and for Lent.
 8. Time for prayer: days and hours: prayer takes place every day except Saturday and Monday. One goes to church
 - Tuesday, from 1930 to 2000.
 - Wednesday, from 530 to 600.
 - Thursday, from 1930 to 2000.
 - Friday, from 530 to 600.
 - Sunday:
 - dawn: from 530 to 600.
 - morning: from 900 to 1000.
 - afternoon: from 1530 to 1600.
 9. Receiving of visitors.
 10. Trips to other communities.

This whole section concludes with the author's word of approval: "The internal rule, as can be observed, reigns as master in all of the parts of the religious life of the

Harrist faithful."

The next section is entitled "Penance in the Harrist Religion." An important place is given to the description and explanation of this usage; in contrast to the ritual wearing of white, the practice of penance is seen specifically to be a recommendation of the Prophet Harris himself. It is defined as a penalty—or punishment—which the apostles impose upon any faithful person who goes counter to the commandments of God or the internal rule of the church. By accepting the penalty and publicly confessing one's sins at the church, a person fulfills "the one act through which God will be able to pardon our innumerable daily sins."

What God asks is to follow uniquely his commandments which are found in the Holy Book, the Bible. To have forgiveness for our sins, to prepare our place in his persence, to be judged his good children, God requires of us the love of our neighbour. Yes, "Love your Neighbour as Yourself," even if he is your enemy. This is a condition which will easily lead Man into His Presence, God the All-Powerful. However, this condition is applicable for Man with difficulty, in spite of his regular attendance at church and in spite of his numerous takings of communion.

A description is given of procedures that are followed at the time of a death. Among other things, if a person has not paid all of his or her church dues (the only reference to this) which record is in the General Register of the church, either the family must pay that which is outstanding or the church would not accord a religious office for the deceased. In the latter case, the family itself would be completely responsible for funeral and burial services.

All of these practices described by the Internal Rule need to be made more uniform, according to the author who sees the various organisms of the larger Harrist Community already doing that very thing. These include the National Committee, the Association of Preachers, the Association for the Renewal of Harrism, and the Union of Harrist Youth. But the author goes on to list a number of important differences which he feels should also be dealt with by these organisms.

These differences center on how and when to celebrate the annual Harrist festivals, festival for children, ceremony of family reconciliation, practices associated with taking the Sunday morning offering, how to celebrate Ascension Thursday, the appropriate time for the Christmas mass, funeral practices, vestments for special occasions, and celebration of Easter.

The author writes of a School for the Religious Education of Harrism and a College for the Preparation of Apostles and Preachers as ways of working for a "strict and uniform preservation of a future Internal Rule. In addition, the education and structuring of leadership of the Harrist Youth of the year 2000 must be foreseen

in order to safeguard the originality of Harrism and the development of this religion." Thus he concludes more than five years of study and observation.

Theology in the Harrist Church

Characteristic words

Such, in a rather straightforward presentation, is the résumé of the contents of the booklet. However, much of the color and savor of the text has been lost. Some of this comes from the repeated use of the word **respect**: respect for God, his will, his commandments; respect for preachers, apostles, and guardians; respect for self, for others, for other religions. **Forbidden** is not an uncommon word, as is its opposite, **authorized**. Although the word **holy** is used guardedly, it is clearly present, describing the cemetery as a holy place, or the table in front of the church as the holy table; the cross-staff carried by a Superior Preacher is a holy staff, and the Cape Palmas area of Liberia where the prophet's tomb is found is holy land. But one also receives the distinct impression that the church—as building—is clearly a holy place, even if the word is not used in its connection; and the Altar—often capitalized in the text—is indeed a kind of holy of holies. For both church and Altar, it is extremely important to penetrate in an orderly way. More important is the clear distinction made in the text between what takes place **in** the church before God, and what occurs **outside** the church.

A cluster of words deals with shame and pride, worthiness and unworthiness, and honor and dishonor; here is a subsidiary preoccupation which shines through the text. At the same time, sin is perceived as a weight; it can increase certain maledictions and render one more vulnerable to an early death. That is why the apostles' responsibility is to snatch the faulty away from the wrath of God. Should they hesitate to inflict punishment upon a faithful person of high intellectual standing because of fear of meeting his surprises, his sins fall systematically upon these apostles who fear the wrath of humans more than that of God.

God is worshiped as Creator and Master. He has created the earth and the universe—the "whole vastness of nature"; he has designated humans as masters of all creatures. As all-powerful Master, God has a will for humans on the earth; to go contrary to his will on and for the earth is "very dangerous." "Religion is an association of men of good will who are completely consecrated to the protection of the human being against the dangers of the earth." Those dangers are clearly designated as "misery, famine, sickness, suffering and death." But these are themselves provoked by humans' quarrels, bloody battles, devastating wars" which have their origins in "egoism, stealing, breach of trust, fraud, dishonesty, to mention only these." Thus the role of religion is clear,

for the latter sins would forever disappear "if the teaching which one receives in a religion would penetrate thoroughly the heart of each being."

Because of all of the dangers mentioned, one must take religion seriously; thus the importance of using phrases like strictly observe, impeccable order, follow scrupulously, compulsory, authorized, strict respect, worthy conduct. So, too, it is **dangerous** to have statues in churches because they form the solid basis of idolatry and fetishism, while "God does not like worship of any other than himself." Also it is **dangerous** to leave Harrism by trying to follow several religious paths at the same time. It is very **dangerous** to use fraudulently those funds that "have been given to the religion." The **danger** of accumulating the weight of one's sin—rather than confessing publicly—is observable in that many have died by paying no attention to that ritual act; others have died prematurely from being ashamed to confess publicly their faults. In such a context, mortal sin is clearly a functional concept.

The condition of the **heart** is accented repeatedly; especially is this true because of the innumerable details about exterior manner of practice. But this is all because of God's knowledge of humans. *No one can escape his vigilance. And when we show him who we are by our body and not by our spirit, our conscience, and our heart by taking communion several times we try to outwit his vigilance, not knowing that God possesses a clear vision for watching out our acts, our gestures, and our daily conduct.* It is possible that this is a polemical parenthesis for Harrists who are attracted by the weekly communion of the Roman Catholic mass, since regular communion is not practiced—to our knowledge—in the Harrist church.

This omniscience of God is a deep conviction of the author. *God, the Creator of the Universe, is the All-Powerful who knows our destiny—and has programmed it—from our conception in the womb of our mother until our very last day. He alone knows what we are and who we are. He alone knows what will happen to us today, tomorrow, and in the future. He alone knows the year, the month, the day and the hour of our end on the earth. He alone knows the fate which will snatch us from our family, our friends and our life. He alone knows all about us. In one word, God is our absolute master who controls us by his will.*

The Sunday collection given **at the church** is seen as a sacrifice which one offers to God for being thankful to him. *During the week, God has watched over our movements. It is he who has given us strength to go to our work for our daily bread, and who has granted to forgive us our innumerable faults and sins committed against him. For all of these*

blessings and for all the pardon of our sins, it is normal that each faithful make an effort to be a good child of God and know that the sacrifice is made at the church before God and not in the open air in the streets as one can often observe.

The contrast between sacrifices made at the church before God and those made in the open air—"ordered by a marabout or a fetishier"—reminds one of Israel's call to sacrifice in the temple of Jerusalem and not on every high hill.

Harrist social gospel

Several references to the kingdom of heaven are made in the text. But one has the distinct impression that it is understood as a uniquely individualistic eschatology, much like *Pilgrim's Progress*; this is quite in contrast to Prophet Harris' own anticipation of the reign of Christ **on the earth**. The kingdom of heaven with its peace and freedom is seen to be difficult to inherit, but in faith one can—one day—enjoy it in God's presence. Probably such a perspective allows the author to place the present social order in the Ivory Coast—with its Rostow-ian model of development—as a part of the order created by God.

The Ivory Coast has developed economically along the model of a highly developed central pocket (Abidjan) with a solidly established, wealthy, bourgeois class. The African monthly *Jeune Afrique* (1980) recently carried a study of twenty years of economic development since political independence in the Ivory Coast: "Growth without development or economic miracle?" Accent is placed upon the major problem of the well-to-do class in its sharp contrast to the Ivory Coast's own particular third world of poverty. "God has explicitly created two categories of men so that his will would be respected. He has created the rich and the poor. But his idea to have created the two species has never had positive results." The rich people forget that true wealth comes from God's will, and they seek to intensify wealth by illegal means. They forget who has brought about earthly happiness and no longer think of their last days. Poor people curse God for having made them thus. They do not seek to pray to God to get them out of their abyss. For them, God does not exist, or if he does he is unjust. Because they are poor and suffer, these people do not see what they would go to seek out at church.

The fact of wanting to become richer than the others, the fact of wanting to be interested more in earthly pleasures than in the commandments of God, the fact of not wanting to be the servant of his neighbour, all make of man a being with evil faith—a veritable enemy of God.

The true rich and the true poor are those who despite wealth or poverty believe that God is the All Powerful; those who do so with their soul, heart, and conscience will inherit the Peace of God. But, asks the author, *How many Harrist faithful think*

about preparing their heavenly freedom? Are they many, those Harrist faithful who believe that the Prophet Harris is he who delivered men from the slavery of idols and fetishes? How many Harrist faithful have the love of God? Naturally, some true Harrists do exist, but they are not numerous."

Harrist liberation theology

This Western Christian observer, looking through the open window to better understand faith in God as lived out in the Harrist movement, is tempted to make parallels with captivity-chastened Israel as reflected in the Book of Leviticus. There, the right manner of effecting sacrifices was essential, as were clear ideas of order and wholeness as reflected in the laws of purity and impurity. (Particularly helpful is the analysis of concepts of pollution and uncleanness in Leviticus noted by Mary Douglas (1976:41-57.) God's holiness and purpose was there mediated through a priesthood serving God and the people in the holy place of the tabernacle. Specific instructions for people and priesthood are seen retrospectively as a schooling by the preincarnate word of a people moving in faith towards the fullness of time where the incarnate Word—the crucified and risen Messiah—was himself the good news.

To attempt to discern from this text what is the nature of the good news as perceived by one young responsible Harrist apostle is perhaps not out of place. It is perceived as liberation from ignorance about God which was expressed by worship through carved wood statues of animals and people sprinkled with animal and human blood. The good news is liberation from constant misgivings, fear, and anguish caused by the genies of the brush and forest. The good news is liberation from the so-called fetishers who kept their subjects—in the name of their genie—in a state of dependence and humiliation and who exploited them economically and morally. The good news is liberation from the various forms of disorder in families through provoked suspicions at times of death and sickness. The good news is liberation from the suffering caused by being "teleguided" by "the satan, the demon, the devil, the deceiving and inhuman fetisher." (The use of the word "teleguided"—as earlier, the word "programmed"—comes quite spontaneously out of the world of modern electronic technology. God has programmed our lives, people are teleguided by evil spirits; this is a most interesting illustration of the transferral of technological concepts into a spiritual universe, as a result of the shock of primal and modern technological cultures.)

The good news of liberation is the good news of the one All-Powerful God, Creator of nature, whose law for humans frees them from the dangers of living and suffering on earth in ignorance of him and his ways. The grandparents of the present

Harrists first experienced that liberation and the transformation which grew out of it, and it has become a powerful tradition.

They now **had their eyes and ears opened**. They **had seen and heard** the Prophet Harris who taught them the good news of God and of Christ. They **had respected** his instructions, And **had conserved** them for us, the men of today and tomorrow. (Emphasis is mine.)

That tradition of liberation through God from ignorance, fear, disorder, and suffering is preserved within a community of prayer and faith, administered in churches built for prayer, which reflect his order and commandments through a religion with its internal rule. In spite of a diversity of practice, "it constitutes all the same a remarkable disciplinary arrangement which contributes to the respect of a Harrist faithful towards his neighbour, and, therefore, to God." Obedient faith in God and his commandments transforms life on the earth and can lead after this life to total peace and true freedom in his kingdom with him in heaven. That is good news and the reason why the Prophet Harris, "liberator of our ancestors remains forever in the heart and spirit of all African people."

Summary review

The major problem of the younger Harrist generation in a rapidly evolving society is to assure not only the tradition, but also the good news. For this writer, the pamphlet indicates already in its own pages that the tradition itself is no longer obviously good news for all within the community. Thus there are those "who change religion several times during the course of their lives. Yesterday Muslims, they became Harrists, and become tomorrow Protestants, then Catholics, to finally remain Witnesses of the Assemblies of God." The last "denomination" cited is based on a lack of clarity about Jehovah's Witnesses—whose literature is read and studied in Harrist circles—and the Assemblies of God whose aggressive evangelism has continued since the unusual religious upsurge of the evangelist Giraud in 1973. The booklet elsewhere indicates that "innumerable Harrists presently are ashamed to go to church with the imposed white clothes. Indeed, they never go to the church even though they have love for their religion." Such developments appear to this writer to solicit a good

news more in conformity with that which inspired the Prophet Harris, who was clearly committed to Christ and his coming reign of peace and prosperity in brotherhood.

No mention is made of the healing ministry of Albert Atcho, who is perceived in much of the French literature as the major expression of Harrism. Nor is any mention made of the future succession of the present spiritual head of the church, Jonas Ahui, who is reportedly some eighty-six years of age. Nor does the author discuss the remarkable interethnic character of the broader Harrist Community and the tensions growing out of a dominant Ebrié participation in the national organisms. Finally, the author does not discuss the major question of the implications for such a movement of passing from an oral, traditional pattern to one conditioned by modern schools and literacy. The Western reader can nevertheless be consoled in knowing that the pamphlet as a whole is a good illustration of such a phenomenon.

References Cited

- Aké, Alphonse Boyé
1980 *Le harriste face à sa religion*
Anono, Ivory Coast: published by the author
- Amos-Djoro, Ernest
1958 *Les mouvements marginaux du protestantisme en Côte d'Ivoire*
Paris: Ecole Pratique de Hautes Etudes, V
- Augé, Marc
1975 *Théorie des pouvoirs et idéologie. Etude de cas en Côte d'Ivoire*
Paris: Hermann
- Barrett, David B.
1968. *Schism and Renewal in Africa*
Nairobi, Addis Ababa, Lusaka: Oxford University Press
- 1971 "And Some Fell on Good Ground"
Risk Vol. 7, No. 3
- Bureau, René
1971 "Le prophète Harris et le harrisme,"
Annales de l'Université d'Abidjan
Ethnosociologie, Série F. 3
- Douglas, Mary
1976 *Purity and Danger* London and
Henley: Routledge and Kegan Paul

Haliburton, Gordon M.

1971 *The Prophet Harris* London:
Longmans

1974 "The Development of Harrisism,"
International Review of Missions
Vol. LXIII, No. 252, October 1974

Harrist Catechism

1956 *Premier livret de l'éducation religieuse à l'usage des missions harristes* Petit Bassam

Holas, Bohumil

1965 *Le séparatisme religieux en Afrique Noire* Paris: Presses Universitaires de France

Jeune Afrique

1980 "Growth Without Development or Economic Miracle?" *Jeune Afrique*
No. 1025, August 27, 1980

Piault, Colette (ed.)

1975 *Prophétisme et thérapeutique. Albert Atcho et la communauté de Bregbo* Paris: Hermann

Shank, David A.

1979 "The Problem of Christian Cross-Cultural Communication Illustrated: Research Notes on 'The Finding of the Prophet Harris by M. Benoit. September 1926,' " *Missiology*
Vol. 7, No. 2

Walker, Sheila

1976 *Christianity African Style: The Harrist Church of the Ivory Coast*
Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Chicago

1977 "Religion and Modernization in an African Context: The Harrist Church of the Ivory Coast,"
Journal of African Studies Vol. 4, No. 1

1980 "Women in the Harrist Movement,"
The New Religions of Africa, edited by Bennetta Jules-Rosette. Norwood, New Jersey: Ablex

Yando, Emmannuel

1970 *L'évolution du harrisme en Côte d'Ivoire* Paris: Faculté Libre de Théologie Protestante

In review

Strangers Become Neighbors: Mennonite and Indigenous Relations in the Paraguayan Chaco. By Calvin Redekop. Scottdale, Pennsylvania, and Kitchener, Ontario: Herald Press, 1980, 305 pp., \$19.95 (\$23.15 Canada)

Reviewed by Titus F. Guenther

In the author's own words, "This book focuses on the history and development of the relationships of a number of different groups, as well as the sociological forces that contributed to the direction the process has taken" (p. 236). These groups are the Mennonite colonists, the Indians, and Paraguayans. In terms of missions the book also deals with foreign German Catholic priest-missionaries from the Oblate order, active in the Chaco since 1925—the Jesuits were active in earlier times, leaving lasting impressions (p. 68f); the Protestant nondenominational New Tribes Mission (NTM), active since 1952; and the Mennonite mission, which was begun almost immediately after the colonists' arrival in the Chaco fifty years ago. Their motto was *Licht den Indianern*—Light for the Indians.

Redekop spent one year in the central Chaco, during which time he gathered a wealth of information. Much of it is shared in the form of direct quotations from the groups involved, thus allowing readers to form their own conclusions. The analysis produced by the author is penetrating, rather inclusive, and well balanced. Its reading will be rewarding to both specialists and interested lay people. If the book has a weakness, it is because of its late publication—eight years after the original research. It does not consider, for example, such major developments as the import of cotton harvesting machines which largely replace Indian labor and heighten competition for land. However, the book's merit of painting a representative picture of inner and inter-group dynamics stands uncontested.

The author places the often conflict-ridden relationships of each ethnic group as well as each mission project into their respective historical contexts. He gives a brief but clear description of pre-missions Indian life and culture (pp. 47-63); a short history of the origins and religious outlooks of the three Mennonite groups in the Chaco (pp. 89-113); a sketch of Catholic missions in Paraguay; and the gradual infiltration of (lower class) Paraguayans who settled in the Chaco.

By moving into the Indians' hunting area,

the colony Mennonites, unwittingly, saved them—around 200 at the time—from biological extinction (cf. 39, 221), only to subject the group to a complete cultural-religious transformation. Today 12,000 Indians slightly outnumber the white Mennonites because of high birthrate, immigration, and modern medicine (p. 13).

The broad objective of the Mennonite mission program from 1935 was: "(1) biblical instruction and conversion; (2) general intellectual uplift of the Indians; (3) improving the hygiene of the Indians; (4) education of the Indian in agriculture to help him become a useful citizen of Paraguay" (p. 142). Though the emphasis rested on spiritual salvation at the beginning, Redekop assures us that the missionaries decided soon "that settlement and mission work went hand in hand" (p. 143). In terms of achieving these goals, Redekop states, "The overall condition of the agriculturization of the Indian is progressing, and is impressive, but there are also slow and disheartening prospects" (p. 176). On the basis of the 1978 *Mennonite World Handbook*, "There are now 4,590 baptized members in the Indian church" (p. 184).

Concerning Indian schooling, Redekop reports for 1977 forty-two schools, with fifty-eight (most of them Indian) teachers and 1,747 students (p. 157). Thus, the Mennonites in their settlement-mission program have not only dismantled the patterns of traditional Indian life; they have also introduced Indians to all the Mennonite institutions: self-administration, cooperative stores, hospitals or clinics, education, and their church pattern. Most of these institutions are largely run by Indians.

The Indians, therefore, are on the way to what Redekop calls a **new peoplehood**. But the process is far from complete, and the author spells out the confusion in which the Indians find themselves (pp. 180-183). The Indians have no desire to become "little Mennonites"; instead, they say, "We need someone to tell us the history of our people" (p. 226). Moreover, Redekop tells us, "The mission program has . . . been subverted by the Indians who respond to the Mennonite settlement program because it provides the possibility of finding a livelihood and . . . an identity—even if that is a quasi-Mennonite **religious identity**" (p. 229). In other words, if initially there was more emphasis on bringing **light** to the Indians, the Indians have shifted the balance so that settlement has assumed a certain priority today. This is less a result of the Mennonite

theology than of the fact of having "lived in with the objects of their mission," says Redekop (p. 228).

The NTM has virtually no dealings with the Catholic mission in the Chaco, but has friendly relations with the Mennonites. Because they are inherently concerned with preaching "the pure gospel" and not with the social aspects of Indian life, the NTM had to look elsewhere for models when the Indians started to demand socioeconomic help. "The NTM people are now actively trying to learn from the Mennonites how Indians can be settled," says Redekop (p. 227).

Like the Chaco Paraguayans, the Catholic missionaries crave close cooperation with the Mennonite mission. But the Mennonites are totally opposed to that idea. The author observed considerable conflict between the two groups. The Catholics must find their own financial support. In their concern to preserve the native culture as intact as possible, they have stressed more the crafts and small industries and less the agriculturalization of Indians. Thus, when they could not compete with the Mennonite program, which received much support from foreign sources, a "wholesale migration of Catholic Indians to the Mennonite Chaco" from one mission station (p. 228) occurred. This naturally caused deep resentment. Things are only aggravated by the fact that the national Department of Indian Affairs favors the Mennonite mission-settlement program as the model "for all Indian settlements" (p. 144).

The Mennonites harbor what Redekop calls "traditionally Protestant" suspicions against the Catholic missionaries: they are not "biblical" and let the Indians live "unredeemed" lives, because not all Indian customs are transformed (p. 192). Colonist Mennonite missions insisted on transforming Indian tradition. The priests consider the main hindrance for cooperation to consist of misunderstanding, and remain open for working with Mennonites. The author, however, does not foresee a more harmonious relationship between the two groups in the near future if Mennonite attitudes do not change.

The present Mennonite-Indian relationship is well captured in the author's evaluative statement. In progress is a *very vast, complex, and changing program*. . . . It is patently clear that the Mennonites and Indians are involved in a mutual process which has changed the Indian society and culture drastically, and which cannot but create tensions, competition, and even

conflict. The remarkable thing is that the settlement program has worked as well as it has, considering the lack of experience and the unsophisticated nature of the Mennonites (p. 155). The author gives the Mennonites of the Chaco a high testimony, when claiming that "although there is much that is not recommendable," the stance of "the Believers' Free Church . . . tradition" (p. 252) comes through clearly in their many-sided relations with their neighbors.

Finally, what has happened since a number of rivaling ethnic and mission groups became neighbors cannot be summed up more fittingly than in Redekop's own words: *The Mennonite ethnic minority, being by self-definition a peaceful minority, nevertheless was thrust in the role of being a dominant power in the Chaco; the Indians, the Catholic and Protestant missionaries, and the Paraguayans found themselves strongly influenced, if not molded by this passive group* (p. 233). The author calls this "one of the great ironies of the Chaco."

What about the future of the Chaco mission settlement? The author gives considerable reflection on which direction the project seems to be headed, as well as some propositions (p. 250ff) on how the inter-group relations might be improved. However, the future of the Chaco is uncertain. As one Chaco Mennonite put it: "We are on an uncharted course. We don't know . . . if in fact the whole effort will turn out to be a colossal failure. . . . We are only trying to meet our Christian neighbor responsibility as God gives us light and strength" (p. 20).

I highly recommend this book to anyone interested in or connected with missions today. Perhaps the single most outstanding feature of *Strangers Become Neighbors* is that it depicts a model different from the conventional missionary "out in the field": here the sending community "lives in" with the missionaries and the missionized people. This can cause extreme anguish, but it offers unique strengths.

Titus F. Guenther lived, worked, and studied a quarter century in the Chaco. He currently is doing studies in theology at St. Michael's College, Toronto School of Theology, Toronto, Canada.

Beyond Brokenness: Biblical Understandings of Mission. By Louis A. Smith and Joseph R. Barndt. New York: Friendship Press, 1980, 125 pp., \$2.95 (pb)

In Your Midst: Perspectives on Christian Mission. Edited by Shiela D. Collins and John A. Collins. New York: Friendship Press, 1980, 52 pp., \$3.25 (pb)

Engaging in Missions: A Study Action Guide. By William Ross Forbes. New York: Friendship Press, 1980, 48 pp., \$2.25 (pb)

Reviewed by Gwen Schlichting

If you are looking for something to stimulate both personal thought and group discussion on the topic of mission, note this set of study materials. It is guaranteed to do just that.

In the main work, *Beyond Brokenness: Biblical Understandings of Mission*, authors Smith and Barndt attempt first to present a secular or humanistic view of the current world situation. Since the presumed readers are North American, well educated, middle class Christians who have ready access to such views, the wisdom of this approach is questionable. The material presented (unfortunately with much unsubstantiated broad generalization) does however serve to make it possible for the authors to develop a Christian interpretation of a broken world in need of being made whole.

In subsequent sections, the authors redeem themselves when they share their understandings of mission based on biblical material. With a focus on the Exodus story, they define the mission of God as that of fashioning, redeeming, and refashioning creation into the Just Community. A delineation of our mission as Christians follows: We are saved not just for heaven, not just to participate in the local church, and not just to see that souls get saved. Rather, God has redeemed us for the purpose of joining him in his mission of bringing peace—total well-being—to all of creation. Everything we are and do constitutes our mission in this world which is God-made and good, yet broken and evil.

Editors Collins and Collins of *In Your Midst: Perspectives on Christian Mission* are to be congratulated. They have successfully gathered a broad range of perspectives in this collection of writings by persons involved in mission either as participants or observers or recipients. While this book is designated as optional in the study guide,

I recommend it be used because it serves to help the reader advance beyond theories and generalizations to understanding what it really means to engage in mission. Members of peace churches should anticipate having their unique position challenged.

This is indeed thought-provoking and dialogue-producing material. The study action guide is a resourceful piece which will help leaders guide group interaction. But will this material free Christians to move beyond discussion to participation in God's mission? Not likely, unless the study is accompanied by much prayer and sensitivity to the leading of the Holy Spirit. Only with such an approach will probable polarization give way to oneness in the Spirit, or will frustration with the immensity of the task and our human frailty fade against the radiating power of the risen Christ.

Gwen Schlichting currently works in economic development on an Indian reserve in Ontario. She formerly was a Christian education instructor at Canadian Mennonite Bible College, Winnipeg, Manitoba.

Puebla and Beyond. By John Eagleson and Philip Scharper. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1979, 370 pp., \$7.95 (pb)

Reviewed by Cornelius J. Dyck

Puebla is the Mexican city in which Pope John Paul II met with the Latin American Roman Catholic Church hierarchy (CELAM) in January 1979. CELAM was founded in Rio de Janeiro in 1955 to unify Roman Catholic theology and practice in Latin America. It had its second meeting in Medellin, Colombia, in 1968 with Pope Paul VI; the third meeting was in Puebla.

Puebla and Beyond contains the *Final Document* (162 pages) of the conference as the heart of the volume, the four addresses of the pope (26 pages), with the rest being most helpful historical background and interpretive articles, including a glimpse into the inside power struggle between the conservatives and the so-called liberation theologians (182 pages). The theme of the conference had been set by Pope Paul VI to be *Evangelization in Latin America's Present and Future*.

Part I begins with an essay on "The Long Path to Puebla," a frank discussion of the mostly sad history of the Roman Catholic Church in Latin America. From its beginning in early sixteenth century, the church was a dependent partner of the state, yet today ninety percent of the region's 320 million people, while nominally Roman Catholic, understand little of the teaching of Christ. Evangelization was defined at this conference, thanks to the intense behind-the-scenes work of concerned progressives, as including both a strengthening of the spiritual life of the people and a relieving of poverty and oppression.

Countless paragraphs throughout the book tell the story of poverty and suffering. A ray of hope came in the early sixties with John F. Kennedy's Alliance for Progress and the election of relatively democratic regimes in Chile, Argentina, Brazil, and other places. **Development** became a key word. But the dream soon faded as military regimes in the name of national security came to power in all of these lands. Development was seen as the ugly underside of North American and national capitalism, a continuing exploitation of the many poor by the few rich and the multinational corporations.

This then also marked the rise of the so-called liberation theologians who identified the gospel with good news to the poor and oppressed. The Medellin Conference in 1968 made a radical commitment to the poor, but the alliance of conservative hierarchies with oppressive state regimes made much of that dream a hope for the future, though thousands went to prison, torture, and death (over 20,000 in Argentina alone) for the sake of justice and human dignity.

As a whole, the pope's speeches straddle the theological and sociopolitical fence—we need justice, but don't rock the boat. Yet encouraging statements include discussion about "the delicate question of property ownership," adding, "it is then that the Church's teaching, which says that there is a **social mortgage** on all private property, takes on an urgent character" (p. 67). There are repeated warnings against alien ideologies, meaning primarily Marxism but including humanism.

The pope's speeches, and the conference itself, do reflect a great pastoral concern. The church is still the best and primary hope for justice and an end to oppression. The many martyrs have not been given sufficient recognition in the *Final Document*. Coupled with this hope are the **Comunidades ec-**

clesial de base (grass-roots communities-movements) springing up all over Latin America (80,000 in Brazil alone), working usually with the support of the church to end poverty and oppression and bring faith and hope, education, and unity to the local level.

This is a depressing but also immensely encouraging book which all who are concerned for disadvantaged people and for evangelism should read, especially if they have ties to Latin America. The walls there between Roman Catholics and Protestants have largely broken down, and the conflict is now believers against an unbelieving, secularized world and, often, political tyranny. Will a time come when Protestants in North and South America can unitedly speak as forcefully to our time as does this volume?

Cornelius J. Dyck teaches Anabaptist and sixteenth century studies at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries, Elkhart, Indiana. He served with Mennonite Central Committee in Europe and South America from 1945-51.

Planting Churches Cross-Culturally: A guide for Home and Foreign Missions. By David J. Hesselgrave. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1980, 462 pp., \$12.95 (pb)

Reviewed by Peter Kehler

The purpose of this book, as stated by the author, is to aid Christians in crossing geographical and cultural barriers in order to preach Christ and to plant the church (p. 38).

Hesselgrave argues: "To allow any understanding of mission to obscure the proclamatory, sacramental, and didactic responsibility of the church is to put the knife to the heart of the Christian mission" (p. 26). Any other activity—such as healing the sick, feeding the hungry, or working for justice among the poor—is to attempt a "heart transplant" which will be rejected.

According to Hesselgrave, there are three sources of missiology: revelation (Scripture investigation), research (scientific observation), and reflection (sound thinking based on experience and knowledge) (p. 45).

In keeping with these three points, the author then presents a detailed study of Acts 13:1-15:4 to expound on the Pauline cycle of church planting.

The basic assumption of the book is that church growth principles not only work but are found in Paul's ministry. To equate the passage in the Book of Acts with church growth principles appears, at least to this reviewer, to be forcing the passage to say something it was not designed to say. There is no indication that Paul engaged in ME-3 evangelism. Paul first went to his own people (ME-1) and then to the Gentiles (ME-2). His audience apparently was literate and had no difficulty in understanding what he said.

The author stresses the importance of research—gathering and analyzing data—before the missionary devises a communication strategy. He correctly points to the weakness in many mission agencies who fail to plan for a national or expatriate successor, a weakness which is perhaps more pronounced in independent mission agencies than in denominational mission agencies.

Hesselgrave laments the fact "that Christian service and witness often seem to be competing concerns in Christian outreach when, in fact, both are Biblical and complementary" (p. 328). However, he gives only token attention to this subject by devoting only a few pages to it, which is weak at best.

The author quotes from many sources—including Edward T. Hall, Robert K. Merton, David Barrett, Peter B. Hammond, and Ruth Benedict—which do not appear in the bibliography.

The book is written in a popular style and features many charts to aid the reader. In addition, each chapter is preceded by a diagram to aid in the study.

Peter Kehler is Secretary for Asia for the Commission on Overseas Mission, General Conference Mennonite Church, Newton, Kansas.

Paul: Mystic and Missionary. By Bernard T. Smyth. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1980, 166 pp., \$7.95 (pb)

Reviewed by Howard H. Charles

"It always does me good," said James Denney, "to see a man enjoying St. Paul." Such a man is Bernard T. Smyth. He is an Irish Catholic missionary priest who has traveled widely in Asia, Oceania, Latin America, and Europe. The idea for this

study came to him while meeting with missionaries in Chile in 1972. The question for discussion was the shape and character of the missionary vocation in today's world. It occurred to him that some helpful guidance might be gotten from Paul, the greatest of early Christian missionaries. The book is the outcome of a fresh study of Paul's letters and the relevant materials in Acts with this question in mind.

This is no academic treatise. The usual critical questions in Pauline studies are virtually absent. The letters and Acts are regarded as complementary sources for reconstructing a picture of Paul as a missionary. The materials are sympathetically interpreted with a dash of mostly sanctified imagination as an aid to the process. The author's style is readable, studded with apt phrases, memorable sentences, occasional flashes of humor, and a few effective illustrations.

The body of the book is composed of sixteen brief chapters grouped around five themes. The first is "Paul and Turmoil," in which some of the personal features of his life and ministry are treated together with his contribution to freeing the gospel from Judaizing control. The second, "Paul and Prayer," portrays Paul as living and laboring constantly in an atmosphere of prayer. The third, "Paul and Christ," explores the centrality of Christ in the apostle's theology and experience. The fourth, "Paul on Mission," covers aspects of his missionary message and his understanding of his mission. The final grouping, "Questions Today," focuses attention on the relevance of Paul for the missionary task today.

The author succeeds in giving us a lively picture of Paul, who is described as "the most reluctant convert in history and the most committed." He is portrayed as one in whose sky Christ was the sun that illumined the whole landscape of life. The resurrection was the taproot of his convictions about Christ. Calvary, however, was the wellspring of his commitment to the service of Christ which for Paul was "an immense and unspeakable privilege." Yet for all of Paul's shining strengths, Smyth does not obscure the weaknesses of the apostle. Attention, for example, is called to the savage assault on Elymas in the opening episode of the first missionary journey with the comment: "Whatever else it was, (it) was not particularly Christian."

Much of richness could be commented on in each of the essays. Of special interest, however, is the last group of essays where

more direct effort is made to bridge the gap between Paul and the contemporary situation. What guidance, for example, can Paul provide in the fields of personal and social ethics? On the personal level Smyth finds two relevant guidelines. (1) We should seek for broad principles arising out of the biblical materials rather than using the Bible as a rule book. (2) The crucial question is whether a given type of conduct contributes to the enrichment or impoverishment of people.

On the matter of social ethics the author finds no warrant in Paul's ministry for choosing between "a highly spiritualized message" and one "more or less ignoring social evils and leaving these to others." Rather, the Christian missionary must recognize social injustice and disorder as an "obstacle to the total liberation of man, and do all that can be done by Christian methods and by an appointed herald of Christian truth to remove the injustice." "Banners and marching do have their place in social revolution, but in the long run it is ideas that alter the shape of society."

The final chapter is an urgent plea for the embodiment of love in Christian mission. "The most important lesson . . . to be learned from Paul the Missionary—and . . . every Christian is called to be in some way a missionary—is that if we are to preach what Christ preached, we must try to love as Christ loved . . . People will be less impressed by the things we say than the samples we are."

For all of the author's insightful comments on the depth of Paul's experiential encounter with the great realities of the Christian faith justifying his use of the term mystic for the apostle, it is a bit strange that no serious attention is given to the role of the Spirit.

No one, however, can read this book without a new appreciation of Paul both as a Christian and a missionary. What is more, there will be greater clarity of how we may be more effectively involved in the same mission to which Paul gave his life with such complete abandonment.

Watch Out for the Foreign Guests: China Encounters the West. By Orville Schell. New York: Pantheon Books, Division of Random House, Inc., 1980, 178 pp., \$8.95.

Reviewed by Atlee Beechy

Schell's *Watch Out for the Foreign Guests* is an interesting and important book. Through sympathetic and concerned eyes the author describes dimensions of the emerging and inevitable cultural tensions as China moves toward modernization. Schell listens well to the pain, hope, and confusion of the Chinese, catching their humanity in a vivid and sensitive manner. He writes understandingly of the way Chinese have thought of themselves in ancient history as the Central Middle Kingdom, and how they have viewed foreigners in the past.

Schell also is sensitive to the ways in which foreign powers exploited and oppressed the Chinese in the later years. He describes the rapid changes going on within China in the context of older Chinese values and traditions. The author is glad for the new Sino-American friendship, but is troubled by what is happening and wonders what all this will mean for the Chinese and Americans in the coming decade.

Schell uses striking and intimate vignettes with settings in various Chinese cities to paint a picture of the conflicting currents that are now at work. He draws from the tour of the USA by Chinese leaders in 1979 when they saw for the first time the rodeos and cheerleaders of Texas, California's Disneyland, and the technology of the Ford plant in Atlanta. Schell wonders what these diverse experiences mean to the Chinese and how they are integrated into the Chinese world view.

This book should be on the required list of reading for anyone planning to visit China and all persons seriously concerned about the future of Chinese and American relationships. The author's thoughtful comments and questions help the reader become aware of some of the important issues involved.

Howard H. Charles is professor of New Testament at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries, Elkhart, Indiana.

Atlee Beechy teaches at Goshen (Indiana) College. He and his wife Winifred led the Goshen College Study-Service Trimester in China in 1980.

MINISTRY AMONG AFRICAN INDEPENDENT CHURCHES

Mennonite Board of Missions relationships with indigenous churches in Africa began with the arrival of workers in Nigeria in 1959 at the invitation of several groups of churches which had no ties to the mainline denominations. Gradually we became aware that the dynamic religious movement evident in Southeast Nigeria was part of a continent-wide phenomenon set in motion by the encounter between Christianity and primal religion.

Dialogue—our basic method. Christian ministry must proceed from a readiness to receive as well as to give, to be taught as well as to teach. The teacher joins the student in the quest for light and life. Therefore, we affirm dialogue as our basic method. We will foster dialogue by:

- *Respecting people in their culture.* Every culture is a context for the Holy Spirit to do his work of re-creation. We are called to identify with another people through careful study of their culture and language, learning to appreciate their folkways and wisdom, recognizing that God communicates his love to each people through their own culture. We are not called to change other peoples' cultures but to serve them as they seek to respond faithfully to the gospel in the context of their culture.

- *Respecting the churches present in a given community in their varieties.* Wherever African independent churches are found, the historic denominations will also be found. Each group deserves to be taken seriously; each one is a part of the network of relationships.

- *Respecting history.* All peoples prize their history—the story of their founder, the vision which gave rise to their movement and continues to infuse meaning into their existence. We must be prepared to travel with a people into their past if we are to understand their present and future.

- *Respecting ourselves.* We, too, are a people with a past who witness to God's providence. If he has preserved us, it is for the purpose of serving and witnessing. In approaching another people we do so aware of who we are because of God's grace. We recognize that coming as outsiders to another people holds positive value which enables us to represent to the ingroup the witness of the church universal as well as the testimony of another minority within the Christian family.

Our basis for dialogue. In order to serve with integrity, we need to affirm what is crucial and essential to us and what we recognize as being part of the larger Christian tradition. The following comprise the basis for dialogue:

- *The gospel of Jesus Christ as the focal point for ministry.* In Jesus Christ we receive the full revelation of God as

loving Creator and Redeemer. We experience the power of the gospel as that which reconciles us to God and to one another, healing us and restoring wholeness (Ephesians 2, 3). We are called to share this gospel with all peoples by testifying to that which we have seen, heard, touched, and experienced (1 John 1).

- *The Bible as God's Word written,* the one document which we have in common with all Christian believers in all times and places and which affords a starting point and a continuing common standard for dialogue.

- *Jesus Christ as the fulfillment of that Word.* We experience and remember his life, death, and resurrection with its implications for imitative discipleship, and we acknowledge him as our active Lord and the Lord of history.

- *The role of the Holy Spirit* in creating community, the body of Christ, through which the work of Christ is being extended today. We believe in the importance of planning and organizing under the Spirit's direction and want to remain flexible and open to his promptings to act in fresh ways as he calls.

- *The centrality of the local church* as the place in which the faithful people find nurture and support, and discern how God is speaking in the present based on the Word, the living Lordship of Jesus Christ, and the continuing prompting of the Holy Spirit. The local church is the base from which mission to the world goes forth.

- *The presence of the future in today's ministry.* The eschaton already reaches into our present, reminding us that we need not be locked into the past. We want continually to view our present in the light of God's preparation of his people for the consummation of all things in Christ.

In relating to various religious movements across West Africa since 1959, we have followed a three-fold approach which includes:

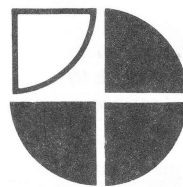
- Providing assistance in Bible study and leadership training.

- Encouraging these various indigenous movements to learn to know and relate to one another.

- Encouraging indigenous movements and traditional denominations to discover one another through fellowship and study.

Our service among indigenous groups is based on the conviction that it augments and reinforces their mission to their people and the world. What strengthens the body of Christ and extends its witness is at the heart of mission. *Excerpted from a policy statement adopted by Mennonite Board of Missions, January 1980; full copy available on request to the editor.*

MISSION FOCUS



Evangelism

DAVID J. BOSCH

In 1980 a number of South Africans were able to attend one of the two world missionary conferences which met in Melbourne, Australia, and Pattaya, Thailand, respectively. I was the only South African privileged to attend both conferences. Probably this fact led people to ask me to apply some of the insights of the two international conference to the South African scene.

In a way, both the Melbourne and Pattaya conferences addressed themselves to the theme of evangelism. They did so, however, from different vantage points, so much so that it became extremely difficult for the organizers of Pattaya to hear what those at Melbourne were saying, and vice versa. I do not intend to present a full-scale comparison of the two conferences here. I have already attempted such comparisons, most recently in *Missionalia* (Bosch 1981:3-18).

Instead, I intend to proceed as follows: First, I will attempt to present the positions of Melbourne and Pattaya by means of two contrasting tables. On the basis of those two tables I will, secondly, discuss the definitions of mission and evangelism currently in vogue in ecumenical and evangelical circles. I then will indicate where I believe them to have gone wrong and attempt an interpretation of evangelism that is both true to Scripture and relevant to the South African scene.

David J. Bosch, a South African theologian and author, first presented the contents of this article at the Evangelism Today Seminar at Rosettenville, Johannesburg, April 27-30, 1981. Among his most recent books are A Spirituality of the Road (Herald Press, 1979) and Witness to the World (John Knox, 1980).

In the two tables that follow, **Melbourne** should be seen as shorthand for the ecumenical understanding of mission and evangelism, and **Pattaya** as shorthand for the evangelical view (Bosch 1981:5-6).

Melbourne

Showed a preference for the "Jesus language" of the Gospels

Began with "human's disorder."

Stressed unity (at the expense of truth?)

Believed that God reveals himself also through contemporary experience.

Emphasized the deed (orthopraxis).

Regarded social involvement as part and parcel (or all?) of the Christian mission.

Judged societal ethics to be of prime importance.

Viewed sin as having a corporate dimension.

Pattaya

Showed a preference for the language of Paul's epistles.

Began with "God's design."

Stressed truth (at the expense of unity?)

Believed that God reveals himself only through Jesus Christ (and in Scripture/the church).

Emphasized the word (orthodoxy).

Regarded social involvement as separate from mission, or as a result of conversion.

Judged personal ethics to be of prime importance.

Viewed sin as exclusively individual.

Tended to equate mission with humanization or social change.

Viewed proclamation as **rendering support** to fellowship and service.

Emphasized liberation.

Heard the cry of the poor and the oppressed.

Considered humans from the perspective of creation.

Judged humanity positively.

Denied the existence of clear boundaries between the church and the world.

Regarded the world as the main arena of God's activity.

Underscored the church's credibility.

Was concerned about witnessing where the church **is**.

Divided the world into rich and poor, oppressor and oppressed.

Revealed a proclivity towards socialism.

Highlighted Jesus' human nature.

Focused attention on the universality of Christ.

Tended to equate mission with a call to conversion or church planting.

Viewed proclamation as primary; it **gives birth** to fellowship and service.

Emphasized justification and redemption.

Heard the cry of the lost.

Considered humans from the perspective of the Fall.

Judged humanity negatively.

Affirmed the existence of clear boundaries between the church and the world.

Regarded the church as the main arena of God's activity.

Underscored the church's opportunities.

Was concerned about witnessing where the church **is not**.

Divided the world into "people groups."

Revealed a proclivity towards capitalism.

Highlighted Jesus' divine nature.

Focused attention on the uniqueness of Christ.

Without elaborating on the discussions, documents, and materials representing the two movements behind Melbourne and Pattaya, let me simply venture the opinion that it may be possible to argue that Melbourne is, in many respects, typical of views held by black South African Christians and Pattaya of those held by white Christians in South Africa. If there is even a grain of truth in this contention, it behooves us to look carefully at the two conferences to discern what they are saying to us.

Melbourne tended to define mission and evangelism broadly. Melbourne was **not** a meeting of the World Council of Churches as such, in which the work of all the departments of the Council was to receive attention. Rather, it was a conference of **one** of the commissions—the one charged with the concerns of mission and evangelism. One would therefore expect all the sections at Melbourne to have dealt with themes specifically related to the church's mission and evangelism. Yet, according to some observers, only one out of the four sections dealt with a specifically **missionary** theme: Section III, *The Church's Witness to the Kingdom*.

However, the organizers of Melbourne and many participants defended the inclusion of the other three themes in a **missionary** conference: *Good News to the Poor*, *The Kingdom of God and Human Struggles*, and *The Crucified Christ Challenges Human Power*. They contended that the sociopolitical realities in which millions of people (non-Christian and Christian) live—realities such as global poverty, oppression and exploitation, and manifestations of human power (military, financial, ideological, and political)—all have a profound influence on the church's missionary task in the world. Melbourne did not attempt to distinguish clearly between mission and evangelism. In fact, the two appeared to be practically synonymous.

Pattaya, on the other hand, revealed an aversion to the term, mission. It preferred to speak of evangelism or, more precisely, evangelization, probably because the latter conveyed the idea of action and involvement more clearly than the rather static word, evangelism. Pattaya, moreover, defined evangelization rather narrowly as reaching people

December 1981
Volume 9 Number 4

MISSION FOCUS



65 Evangelism
David J. Bosch

75 Evangelism by the Lifestyle of the Congregation:
A Study of Evangelism as Pictured in the Pastoral
Epistles
Paul M. Miller

78 Evangelism by Lifestyle
David Ewert

83 In review

84 Editorial

EDITORIAL COUNCIL

Editor Wilbert R. Shenk

Managing editor Willard E. Roth

Review editors Adolf Ens, Peter M. Hamm

Other member Robert L. Ramseyer

Editorial assistants Rebecca E. Miller, Merlin Becker-Hoover

MISSION FOCUS (ISSN 0164-4696) is published quarterly by Mennonite Board of Missions, 500 South Main, Elkhart, Indiana. Single copies available without charge. Send correspondence to Box 370, Elkhart, IN 46515. Second-class postage paid at Elkhart, IN 46515. Lithographed in USA. Copyright 1981 by Mennonite Board of Missions. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to **MISSION FOCUS**, Box 370, Elkhart, IN 46515.

with the verbal proclamation of the gospel or calling them to a personal acceptance of Christ as their Savior. Each of Pattaya's mini-consultations on seventeen people groups was to devise ways and means of reaching people, with the word **reaching** featuring prominently in the brief of each group. Pattaya had a passionate concern for reaching people who are eternally lost and would not allow anything or anybody to divert attention to other issues. Evangelism, narrowly defined as persuading people to accept Christ, was given priority. The primacy of evangelism was upheld, as it was in the Lausanne Covenant, but unlike the Lausanne Covenant, which emphasized sociopolitical involvement as an equally indispensable calling of Christians, Pattaya appeared to soft-pedal the latter.

A Statement of Concerns which was circulated privately at Pattaya challenged the conference leadership on this point and alleged that it had in fact retreated from the Lausanne position where it had been affirmed that "the message of salvation implies also a message of judgment upon every form of alienation, oppression, and discrimination, and we should not be afraid to denounce evil and injustice wherever they exist" (Lausanne Covenant, paragraph 5). For all practical purposes, however, the Pattaya conference leadership ignored the Statement of Concerns. An editorial in the American evangelical *Christianity Today* put it as follows: "Some tried to transform COWE [Consultation on World Evangelization, the official designation of the Pattaya Conference] into a conference on social concern, but the leadership managed for the most part to keep the group on track (August 8, 1980:10). Peter Wagner, who played a prominent role in the conference leadership, commented as follows in an unpublished statement, *A very vocal minority at Pattaya attempted to dislodge evangelism as primary in the mission of the church. . . . COWE not only said "No" to the WCC position of the primacy of social service but also to those evangelical brethren who are attempting to load the word evangelism with meanings it never has had. If they had prevailed a new word would have to be invented, but COWE held the line at that point.*

To appreciate Wagner's definition of evangelism, it may help to look at his definition of an evangelical, as put forward in his most recent book. An evangelical, he says, is identified by four characteristics: (1) *an experience of being "born anew" or born again (John 3:1-7); (2) a strong belief in the authority and infallibility of the Bible as the Word of God; (3) a code of life which includes certain positive behavior traits such as daily Bible reading and prayer, grace before meals, and regular church attendance, as well as certain negative traits such as total abstinence from or extremely moderate use of tobacco, alcoholic beverages, and profanity in speech; and (4) a compulsion to participate in the spread of the Christian faith both at home and abroad (Wagner, 1979:3).*

Wagner's understanding of evangelism—and that of many other evangelicals—emerges from this definition of an evangelical: To "spread the Christian faith" clearly means calling non-Christians to faith in Christ and to a lifestyle as depicted in Wagner's item three (3). It is, however, a lifestyle couched entirely in **micro-ethical** categories. Evangelism in these terms means, as Waldron Scott puts it in his recently published book, *Bring Forth Justice*, "Winning people to the enjoyment of personal salvation in Christ so that they too might cultivate a Quiet Time, memorize Scripture, fellowship with other believers,

overcome individual temptations, and witness to the lost" (Scott, 1980:221). (Scott, himself an avowed evangelical, clearly does **not** subscribe to such a limited understanding of evangelism.)

We thus have two almost entirely contradictory understandings of evangelism. Some (not all) ecumenicals would define it almost exclusively as Christian sociopolitical involvement; some (not all) evangelicals would define it as calling people to a lifestyle where only personal and individual conduct matters. I am admittedly referring to the more extreme representatives of the two constituencies, which means that I am, in a way, overstating the difference between the two. Still, enough validity in this portrayal alerts us to the fact that we are faced with a real problem.

Mission

In order to solve this dilemma and point the way towards a more responsible and adequate definition of terms, we should first of all distinguish between **mission** and **evangelism** (Bosch, 1980:11-20). The two are closely related, in that both refer to God's salvific intervention in the world. Both have to do with the crossing of frontiers, with the movement of the gospel into new areas.

Mission is, however, a more comprehensive concept than evangelism. It describes the total task which God has set the church for the salvation of the world. When Jesus outlined his public ministry in the synagogue of Nazareth, he did it in terms of **mission**: "The spirit of the Lord is upon me because he has anointed me; he has sent me to announce good news to the poor, to proclaim release for prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to let the broken victims go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor" (Lk 4:18-19).

Mission is therefore more than an activity aimed at conversion and church planting. Mission is, in a deep sense, **epiphany**. The Feast of the Epiphany is celebrated on January 6, and it recalls the significance of the occasion when Gentile magi came from the East (Mt 2:1) to adore the infant Jesus. The Greek word *epiphaneia* means manifestation. In the epiphany Jesus is, so to speak, shown to the world, held up before the eyes of the world. Epiphany refers to God's arrival on the scene. In mission, God reaches out in grace to his creatures. Mission is the manifestation of the love of God in the crucified and risen Christ. In the words of Vatican II, "Missionary activity is nothing else, and nothing less, than the manifestation of God's plan, its epiphany and realization in the world and in history" (*Ad Gentes* 9). Wherever frontiers are crossed—be they geographical, ideological, cultural, religious, or social—and God's love manifested, mission takes place. Mission is God's concern for the entire world in all its dimensions, God's claim to a world that has been alienated from him. It is God's turning to the world in love. In mission God employs the church in his ministry to the world; in it the reign of Christ is manifested in and through the lives, words, and deeds of the disciples whom he has commissioned.

If we accept this definition, it will indeed be possible to regard the Melbourne Conference as a conference on **mission**. Melbourne was deeply concerned about the crossing of many frontiers, even barriers: those caused by poverty, discrimination, exploitation, culture, power, human conflicts, technology, urbanization, and many more. All those factors cause people to be alienated from God and one another; the church cannot but be deeply

concerned about these, not only because they frequently make it virtually impossible for people to believe but also because they are blasphemous in themselves.

Evangelism: essential dimension of mission

After this cursory account of what mission is, we turn to **evangelism**. Evangelism is, in a way, narrower than mission. Perhaps we can say that evangelism is an **essential dimension** of mission. I prefer the word, dimension, to component or segment or part. It appears that John Stott would define evangelism as a component of mission (Stott, 1975). Stott describes mission as evangelism plus social action. Thus, in his view mission consists of two separately identifiable segments, evangelism and social involvement, or, as they are sometimes referred to, the "evangelistic mandate" and the "cultural mandate."

However, this definition is susceptible to grave misunderstanding and abuse. The moment mission is defined in this way, either one or both of two things may happen: (a) You may give primacy to either evangelism or social action, which in the course of time may lead to (b) divorcing the one from the other. This is indeed happening, among both evangelicals and ecumenicals. Placing either evangelism or social involvement in priority leads to the other component being played down, neglected, and in the end even discarded. On the other hand, if we regard evangelism as an essential dimension of the wider concept of mission, as the heart or core of mission, we are absolved of the need either to defend our particular priority constantly or to try to achieve a neat balance between evangelism and social action. In fact, to contrast evangelism with social action is in itself misleading, as it tends to suggest that evangelism *a priori* lacks a social dimension and social action an evangelistic dimension.

What then specifically is evangelism? The Lausanne Covenant, paragraph 4 defines it as follows: *To evangelize is to spread the good news that Jesus Christ died for our sins and was raised from the dead according to the Scriptures, and that as the reigning Lord he now offers the forgiveness of sins and the liberating gift of the Spirit to all who repent and believe. Our Christian presence in the world is indispensable to evangelism, and so is that kind of dialogue whose purpose is to listen sensitively in order to understand. But evangelism itself is the proclamation of the historical, biblical Christ as Savior and Lord, with a view to persuading people to come to him personally and so be reconciled to God. In issuing the Gospel invitation we have no liberty to conceal the cost of discipleship. Jesus still calls all who would follow him to deny themselves, take up their cross, and identify themselves with his new community. The results of evangelism include obedience to Christ, incorporation into his church and responsible service in the world.*

Similar, yet in some respects different, is the definition of evangelism formulated by the British Nationwide Initiative in Evangelism (NIE) in which "ecumenicals," "evangelicals," and Roman Catholics cooperated. In a statement on "The Gospel we affirm together," they said this about evangelism: *Christ still sends all his followers into the world as his witnesses. Christians commend not themselves but the love of God as known in Jesus. What we are and do is no less important in this than what we say. As we humbly but joyfully reflect God's reconciling love for all humanity, in friendship and mutual respect, the Holy Spirit uses our witness and*

service to make God known. The joy of sharing good news simply because it is good is the common joy of all Christians. God has exalted Jesus to his right hand, that every knee should bow to him and every tongue confess that he is Lord (Phil 2:9-11). (NIE, 1980:3).

Neither of these two summaries is perfect. Still, they are valuable working definitions. I intend to use them as such, in the hope that in this way we will obtain greater clarity.

Announcing what God has done

Both the statements quoted above declare that evangelism is, first and foremost, an **announcement of what God has already done**. The opening sentence of the Lausanne Covenant, paragraph 4, makes that clear. Likewise, in the statement of the British NIE, Christians are called **witnesses**. A witness primarily gives testimony to what has already happened. These witnesses thus, quite correctly, do not "commend themselves" but "the love of God as known in Jesus." This is the good news (*euangelion*): The kingdom **has** come; God has manifested his justice through Jesus Christ (cf. Rom 3:21-27); he has conquered the powers of darkness (cf. Col 1:13) and triumphed over the power of death (cf. 2 Tim 1:10); he has, in Christ, broken down the middle wall of partition between Jews and Gentiles (Eph 2:14-17), which means that he has shattered all the barriers that divide the human family and has made possible a new community. What God has done once and for all in Christ, he is still doing today; evangelism is therefore "the good news of how God takes sinners and builds them into a new society which constitutes the first installment of God's kingly rule in a rebel world" (Green, 1979:15).

This is where evangelism begins: with what God has done, is doing, and will do. Only then can the rest follow. When Jesus commenced his public ministry, he began by proclaiming, "The time has come; the Kingdom of God is upon you," and only **then** did he proceed to say, "Repent, and believe the good news." If we turn this sequence around, then the gospel will be replaced by the Law. So evangelism is not a call to put something into effect but to **respond** to what has already been put into effect.

Verbal proclamation—and more!

Is evangelism exclusively verbal proclamation? Many people believe it is. The Lausanne Covenant apparently endorses this view, for it says, "Evangelism itself is the **proclamation** of the historical, biblical Christ as Saviour and Lord." The NIE is far more cautious. It refers to evangelism as commending the love of God and reflecting God's reconciling love, and states that "the Holy Spirit uses our witness and service to make God known." It also says, "What we are and do is no less important in this than what we say."

Behind these different nuances in the Lausanne Covenant and the NIE document lies the whole debate whether evangelism should be described in terms of **presence** or **proclamation** or **persuasion**. Those who emphasize "presence evangelism" are reacting to the triumphalism of much past Christian history. They are also saying that, unless the church becomes **credible**, it is useless to try to persuade people to become Christians. On the other hand, if Christians through their lifestyle and conduct really mirror the spirit of Christ, this in itself will draw people to him (Warren, 1977:189-204; Margull, 1977:219-230).

One of the best-known proponents of "proclamation evangelism" is James I. Packer. Anyone who faithfully proclaims the message is evangelizing, whether conversions follow or not. Evangelism should not be defined in terms of success or results (Packer, 1961; Stott, 1975:35-57). John Stott says, "Evangelism is neither to convert people, nor to win them, nor to bring them to Christ, though this is indeed the first goal of evangelism. Evangelism is to preach the gospel" (Stott, 1975:39).

Peter Wagner, however, defines evangelism in terms of its **results**. Evangelism is to **persuade** people to become Christians. If this does not follow, people may have been engaged in evangelistic efforts, but they have not done evangelism. Referring to the Great Commission, Wagner states, *The basic imperative here is to make disciples.*

Going, preaching, baptizing and teaching are all auxiliary functions, geared to making disciples. The parables describe sowing the seed only as a necessary means toward the end of harvesting the fruit. One of the dangers of defining the goal of evangelism as proclamation is that seed sowing may become an end in itself, thus blurring the vision of the fruit (Wagner, 1971:128-129).

I do not intend to enter more deeply into this controversy. Evangelism is not simply presence, proclamation, or persuasion; rather, authentic evangelism will of necessity consist of word **and** deed, proclamation **and** presence, explication **and** example.

The **word** is indispensable for the simple reason that our deeds, "Christian presence," and example are ambiguous. They need explication. The best we can hope for is for people to recognize that we have a hope within us. **What** that hope is is not clear to outsiders. We are therefore exhorted always to be ready to give an answer to everyone who asks us to give a reason for the hope we have (1 Pet 3:15). Our lives are not sufficiently transparent for other people to be able to recognize whence our hope comes.

Equally indispensable in our evangelism, however, is our example, the entirety of our Christian presence. Evangelism is more than verbal proclamation. The Greek word from which the verb "to evangelize" is derived, is the word *euangelizomai*. In Bible translations such as the *Revised Standard Version* (RSV), the *Jerusalem Bible* (JB), the *Good News Bible* (GNB), the *New English Bible* (NEB), and the *New International Version* (NIV), the word *euangelizomai* is almost universally translated "to preach" or "to preach the gospel." This of course suggests an exclusively **verbal** presentation of the gospel, particularly to modern ears. A careful reading of the New Testament will show that this is far too narrow an interpretation. An example is the *ptūchoi euangelizontai* (literally: "the poor are being evangelized") in the context of Jesus' message to John the Baptist in Matthew 11:4-6. These words are variously translated, "the poor are hearing the good news" (NEB), or "the good news is preached to the poor" (GNB and NIV), or "the poor have the gospel preached to them" (Authorized Version). All these translations suggest, to the modern reader, an exclusively **verbal** preaching. In the context of the entire ministry of Jesus it is, however, clear that "to evangelize the poor" means infinitely more than just **preaching** to them.

Neither is this the case only in the Gospels. Richard B. Cook of the National Farm Worker Ministry in the USA has argued that in the Pauline epistles "preach" or "preach the gospel" is also far too narrow and imprecise a translation for *euangelizomai*. The Greek indeed has a

word for verbal proclamation, namely *kērussō*, which is used eighteen times in the Pauline epistles, whereas *euangelizomai* occurs twenty-one times. A comparison of the uses of the two words indicates that Paul did not use them as synonyms.

What is striking is that Paul uses *euangelizomai* particularly frequently in his Epistle to the Galatians—seven times out of the twenty-one times it occurs in all the Pauline epistles together. Particularly in Galatia was the heart of Paul's understanding of the gospel in jeopardy. In this epistle, more than any other, he wanted to demonstrate that the gospel was more than a new teaching or a new law but a radically new way of living, in which the old order had been turned upside down and the new creation had come into being (cf. Gal 3:28; 6:15). Paul's frequent use of the verb *euangelizomai* in this context, as expressing the witness he imparted to the Galatians, thus surely refers to more than preaching.

Cook suggests that in Galatians, *euangelizomai* may be translated "present the gospel" or "embody the gospel in your midst." Galatians 1:16 may perhaps be rendered, not "that I might preach him among the Gentiles," but "that I might **live** him before the Gentiles." This translation is given further credence by the fact that Paul thought of himself as somehow physically representing and expressing the crucified Christ to the Galatians (cf. Gal 3:1 and 6:17). The term **preach** certainly cannot convey the depth of Paul's meaning here. The modern connotations of preaching—invested, as they are with clerical overtones—simply do not convey the thoroughly dynamic quality of Paul's activity. For Paul, doing gospel work (evangelizing) was not just standing on a podium addressing an audience; it was a **way of life**. To translate *euangelizomai* throughout with "to preach the gospel" has revivalistic connotations completely foreign to Paul's ministry. Evangelism is an activity for all Christians and not just preachers.

This means that the popular understanding of evangelism as getting an outside speaker (preferably famous) to address large crowds during what is called a campaign or a crusade can under no circumstances be understood as the authoritative definition of evangelism. The psychological and rhetorical devices frequently employed in this kind of evangelism cause it to be even more remotely removed from New Testament evangelism. This entire modern interpretation of evangelism in fact presupposes Christendom—a society in which it is popular to be a Christian, in which the church is a respected part of society because it does not turn the world upside down. Evangelism as it emerges from the pages of Paul's epistles is, however, something that involves the entire person and often takes the shape of silent suffering and compassion rather than amplified rhetoric.

I am in no way decrying evangelism as public verbal proclamation. I am only saying that the manner in which it is sometimes done reveals arrogance and bigotry rather than compassion and understanding. True verbal evangelism should be organic rather than organized. It is that which is referred to in 1 Peter 3:15: "Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect" (NIV).

This answer may not always be forthcoming immediately; when Ezekiel came to the exiles at the River Kebar, he sat with them for several days before he opened his mouth (Ezek 3:15). Yet, open our mouths we must. In a society in which the church stands guilty because it has

failed in so many respects, it is supremely necessary that we do indeed give an account of the hope that is in us and point with conviction and authority to Christ, the Savior and Lord of humankind.

Personal repentance and conversion—and more!

Evangelism is an announcement of what God has done, is doing, and will do. It is communicated through the lives and words of God's children. It is also a **call**. But whom does it call and to what does it call them?

The Lausanne Covenant, paragraph 4, says that in evangelism the forgiveness of sins and the liberating gift of the Spirit are offered to all who **repent and believe**; evangelism is, moreover, **persuading people to come to Christ personally and so be reconciled to God**.

Evangelism is calling **individual sinners to repentance**. People are plunged into sin and bound for destruction, but God offers them redemption through Christ. Each one has to repent and embrace Christ in faith. I believe that this understanding of the goal of evangelism is correct (and on this score the Lausanne Covenant is clearer than the NIE document in which the goal of evangelism receives scant mention.)

We do indeed need new men and women if we are to hope for a new world; and in order to become such new men and women, individual people have to experience a personal and life-giving encounter with the risen Christ. To dispense with repentance, redemption, and faith is to divest the gospel of its central significance. A genuine, personal renewal is called for—a renewal so far-reaching and decisive an experience that Jesus referred to it as “being born all over again” (Jn 3:3-8), and Paul described it as “putting on the new self which is created in God's likeness” (Eph 4:24). True evangelism aims at that kind of personal renewal. If it does not do so, it becomes completely self-defeating and pointless, and it ends in the frustration of challenging people to pull themselves up by their own bootstraps. The gospel is then once again replaced by law. We know, however, through our study of Scripture **and** through our own experience, that we are unable to keep the Law, that we are guilty before God, that we need a Savior, and that Christ is the only Savior.

Once again, all this is correct. But it is **inadequate** on two counts. First, this description depicts conversion almost exclusively as an isolated personal and individualistic experience; second, it once again allows the risk of ignoring the fact that evangelism is an announcement of what God has done **before** it tells us that we are guilty before the Law.

A few relevant aspects of these two points can be highlighted, with particular reference to Paul's epistle to the Galatians (Stendahl, 1976; Krass, 1978:69). Galatians has always been regarded as Paul's most theological epistle, apart from Romans. In fact, these two epistles have, particularly in Protestantism, been viewed as containing the quintessence of the Pauline *kerygma*. That *kerygma* has been summarized as, *No individual can fulfill the Law, not even Paul himself. In fact, the Law declared him guilty.*

So, after he had tried in vain to live according to the Law and had, instead, simply discovered more and more how hopeless and helpless he was, he embraced Christ in faith. Today's evangelist should therefore, in like manner, convict his listeners of their guilt and inability to keep the Law. He should point them to faith in Christ as the only way out of their dilemma, and he should do it

by using the Law as “tutor unto Christ” (cf. Gal 3:23).

There is an element of legitimacy in this reasoning, but there are also some flaws in it. In any case, this reasoning cannot be deduced directly from Galatians (nor, for that matter, from Romans). In fact, if we interpret Galatians from this perspective, the epistle becomes a curious and haphazard mixture of theological statements about justification by faith alone, along with a variety of references to apparently ethical or historical issues such as Paul's account of his calling to the apostolate, Peter's hypocritical withdrawal from meals with Gentiles, and disputes about circumcision.

The whole situation changes, however, when we recognize that Galatians is not primarily a treatise about our guilt before God because of our inability to keep the Law. The context is, rather, the situation in Galatia where the question was whether Gentiles could join the church without being circumcised. The question is, therefore, one about the relation between Jews and Gentiles in the church. Paul was not concentrating on the argument that people cannot keep the Law (which, of course, is true), but saying that the Law has been abrogated. He was not saying that the Law tutors us unto Christ because we have discovered that we cannot keep it, but that the Law had a role to play only until Christ came. Paul was not criticizing the Galatians because of their inability to keep the Law, but because of their desire to make the keeping of the Law a means of salvation. The issue at stake is salvation history, not guilt. In other words, Paul was not saying, “You may just as well give up living according to the prescriptions of the Law; you are unable to do it and are simply enhancing your guilt,” but, “You should not even try to live according to the Law as a prescription for salvation. Let bygones be bygones! A new era has dawned in which the Law as a barrier between Jews and Gentiles has been removed and both have been made one.” Paul had discovered that the expected order of conversion (“first the Jews”) has been reversed and that Gentiles are included as full heirs to the promises of Israel.

Elsewhere Paul said essentially the same thing. Whenever he used the concept *mystērion* (mystery) in the sense of something that was formerly not disclosed but has now been revealed, it had a salvation-historical meaning: formerly the Gentiles were outside, now they have, with the Jews, direct access to God, and have, in fact, been made **one** with them. The New International Version's translation of Ephesians 3:6 is particularly clear on this point and also closer to the Greek than most others: “This mystery is that through the gospel the Gentiles are heirs together with Israel, members together of one body, and sharers together in the promise in Christ Jesus.”

Paul's use of the expression, new creation (*kainē ktisis*), is also essentially salvation-historical and not individualistic or psychological (Yoder, 1980:123-133; Theron, 1978:55-78). This specific expression is used in 2 Corinthians 5:17 and Galatians 6:15, and most English Bible translations render it as “new creature” in the sense of an individual being created afresh by God. Typical of this tendency is the King James Version: “If any man is in Christ, he is a new creature.” The Living Bible puts it even more pointedly: “When someone becomes a Christian, he becomes a brand new person inside.” So it adds the notion of inwardness to that of individualness. The rest of this verse is usually translated in such a way that it underscores these notions: “He is not the same anymore. A new life has begun!” (Living Bible).

Augustine then reapplied Paul's *kerygma* to a more general and timeless human problem, that of the introspective human conscience and of humans' guilt before God. Augustine's argument reached its climax in the penitential struggle of the Augustinian monk, Martin Luther (Stendahl, 1976:78-96; Krass, 1978:71). Since then evangelism has meant inculcating guilt feelings in individual listeners by convincing them of the fact that they are unable to keep the Law, and then, when they are in utter despair, showing them a way out by proclaiming to them justification by faith.

This kind of preaching is **not** invalid or unbiblical. We should read Paul on his own terms instead of proof-texting him to buttress a particular understanding of Christian experience (Krass, 1978:69). The traditional Western interpretation at this point is one-sided; we cannot, in a facile way, appeal to Paul as our authority for this. Paul's way of evangelizing is, rather, to say to Jews **and** Gentiles, "Welcome to the new community!" The Response to Lausanne which was prepared in reaction to the Lausanne Covenant, puts it succinctly: "The new birth is not merely a subjective experience of forgiveness. **It is a placement within the messianic community**, God's new order which exists as a sign of God's reign to be consummated at the end of the age" (emphasis mine).

Personal salvation—and more!

Evangelism, we have just established, is calling individuals to repentance and faith while at the same time placing them within a new community in which the barriers between people have lost their ultimate meaning. As such it is a message of **rescue and deliverance**, it is God reaching out to human need, it is God hearing and responding to people's agony and despair. He grants forgiveness of sins, release from guilt, peace of mind, joy, hope, trust. He gives rest to those who labor and are heavy laden (cf. Mt 11:28). There is indeed much personal tragedy, emptiness, loneliness, physical and mental agony, estrangement, meaninglessness, and weariness in the world. To people suffering from these and similar maladies the gospel comes as peace, comfort, fullness, and joy. It is therefore perfectly in order that the gospel be presented as the answer to people's needs.

Yet, if this is all we have said, we have not said enough. Reinhold Niebuhr once said that the gospel, if we proclaim it faithfully, will comfort the afflicted and afflict the comfortable. This is a profound observation, but we have to go one step further. We cannot simply divide humankind neatly into two categories, the afflicted and the comfortable. There is, on the whole, something of being afflicted and something of being comfortable in all of us. As Raymond Fung put it at the Melbourne Conference, each one of us is both a sinner and a sinned-against. We therefore need God's word of comfort as well as his word of affliction, but in such a way that the comfort, not the affliction, has the final word. "The Lord," said the prophet Hosea, "has torn us to pieces but He will heal us; He has struck us but He will bind up our wounds" (6:1), and Habakkuk knew that, in his wrath, God remembers mercy (3:2).

This does **not** mean that evangelism is the same as offering people what they ask for. Some evangelists, said Paul in 2 Corinthians 2:17, are nothing but "hawkers" (NEB), people "who handle God's message as if it were cheap merchandise" (GNB). They present the gospel as a

consumer product, exclusively in terms of the benefits it will give the respondent. They shout to people, "Come to us! We and we alone have the real thing! Come to us! We guarantee you the best deal!" This kind of evangelism has prompted Juan Carlos Ortiz to remark caustically, *It is the gospel of the big offer. The gospel of hot sale. The gospel of the irresistible special deal. . . . We have told people, "If you accept Jesus you will have joy, you will have peace, health, prosperity. . . . If you give Jesus ten dollars, you will get twenty dollars back." . . . Our gospel is like Aladdin's lamp; we think we can rub it and receive everything we like. No wonder Karl Marx called religion the opiate of the masses* (Ortiz, 1980:211). Such Western evangelistic techniques depersonalize the hearers of the gospel and reduce Christ "to a consumer product . . . a bar of soap" (Ortiz, 1980:211).

A variant of this approach is to present Christ as a psychological panacea. During the International Congress on World Evangelization in Lausanne (1974), some 400 of us met on the Sunday evening following the Billy Graham rally in the stadium. During our discussion an Indian took issue with an evangelistic approach which concentrates on questions such as, "Are you satisfied? Do you want peace of mind? Are you fed up with yourself? Do you need love, joy, peace in your heart?" This approach, the Indian said, may be all right for the affluent and comfortable people of Europe, but in India such a message would be completely irrelevant because it neatly bypasses all the real issues. Waldron Scott also comments on this psychological approach in the U.S. campus evangelism. He says, *This is natural and appropriate for it meets the "felt needs" of North American students who, in the global context, are unimaginably rich in material goods. Salvation must be offered to them in relevant terms. What needs do rich people have other than psychological needs? Consequently we tend to present a spiritualized salvation based on a psychologically-oriented gospel* (Scott, 1978:208-209).

Karl Barth, in a penetrating excursion in Vol. IV/3 of his *Church Dogmatics*, addresses himself to this topic (Barth, 1962:561-614). The classic Christian teaching, he says, has been to regard the church as a kind of institute of salvation and Christians as enjoying an indescribably magnificent private good fortune (p. 567). The terrible danger in this view, Barth says, is that eventually Christ may be downgraded to little more than the Dispenser and Distributor of special blessings (pp. 595-596). People's chief concern is then with the saving of their souls, or their experience of grace and salvation, in short, with the establishment of their personal well-being in their relationship with God (p. 572). Barth regards this whole understanding of becoming and being a Christian as thoroughly unbiblical and egocentric. The personal enjoyment of salvation nowhere becomes the theme of biblical conversion stories, not in the case of those who listened to John the Baptist preaching (Lk 3:10-14), nor of Zacchaeus or the Philippian jailer (p. 572). Not that enjoying salvation is wrong, unimportant, or unbiblical (cf. Col 3:15; 1 Tim 6:12; Heb 9:15; 1 Pet 5:10; Rev 19:9), but this is only incidental and secondary (p. 593; cf. p. 572); people receive it, as it were, without expecting or seeking it. What makes someone a Christian is **not** his personal experience of grace and redemption, but his ministry: God and his fellow human beings "have become more important to him, and indeed qualitatively more important, than he can be to himself" (p. 592). Indeed, he receives forgiveness, justification, and sanctification **in order to be serviceable** (p.

593). Being called by God to faith in Christ means being simultaneously commissioned by God to perform a task in the world.

There can be no doubt that Barth is correct here. Much evangelism seems to have as its overriding purpose the preparation of people for the hereafter. They must be challenged to accept Christ so as to make sure of procuring a passage to heaven. The saved in the biblical text, "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved," is reduced to the reservation of a room in heaven. The motive for accepting Christ is one's own redemption. Evangelism thus fosters pious egocentrism.

We may now react by pointing out that our evangelism is the opposite of pious egocentrism since we are indeed concerned about others and go out into the world to proclaim the gospel. This reaction certainly has validity. But if our going out into the world leads to nothing but bringing people into the church, we are back where we were. Individual self-centrism then simply becomes collective self-centrism. Evangelism comes full circle: People are brought into the church with the purpose of being sent out to bring others into the church, and so on. The church thus becomes an end in itself. It collects and conserves people for heaven; it is a waiting room for the hereafter. As such it becomes an institute of self-preservation which invites people to come in out of the world. It does not itself go into the world except in evangelistic forays, during which people are snatched from mortal peril and dragged aboard a lifeboat. The emphasis on being saved for the next life in fact alienates and separates the new convert from the world.

The biblical images of conversion and of the church are different. Christians are the salt of the earth, the light of the world, the leaven in the yeast. The church exists for the world, not the world for the church, as a reservoir from which the church draws. The calling of people to Christ is not to be viewed as an expression of favoritism but as election to service. It is not exclusively to receive life that people are called, but rather to give life. They are to make life-giving the central characteristic of their lives, instead of encouraging religious navel-gazing we have to encourage kingdom-expectation and kingdom-participation. The central message should not be, "Come to us," but "Let us follow after Him" (Krass, 1978:74-75). Says Waldron Scott, *Evangelism aims at discipleship, and discipleship requires commitment to the King and commitment to the purposes of the King in history. . . . An evangelistic invitation oriented towards discipleship will include a call to join the living Lord in the work of his Kingdom. It will point to specific needs in the larger world beyond the individual's private concerns. It will direct attention to the aspirations of ordinary men and women in society, their dreams of justice, security, full stomachs, human dignity, and opportunities for their children* (Scott, 1980:209,212). John Alexander, editor of *The Other Side* says, "At its heart evangelism is asking people whom they want to serve" (Alexander, 1980:11). In a way, salvation is not something the person gets but something that happens to him or her—the water Jesus gives becomes a spring of water welling up to eternal life (cf. Jn 4:14).

The Lausanne Covenant, paragraph 4, is correct in identifying the close relationship in evangelism between the offer of personal salvation and the call to commitment: "In issuing the gospel invitation we have no liberty to conceal the cost of discipleship. Jesus still calls all who would

follow him to deny themselves, take up their cross, and identify themselves with his new community."

A call to religious commitment—and more!

Commitment—involving discipleship, denying oneself, and taking up the cross, as expressed in the Lausanne Covenant—includes religious commitment. People who respond to the message of evangelism are expected to join a community called the church, a community which is **in** but not **of** the world, a community that can have meaning only if and in so far as it remains identifiably separate from any other community. It is a worshiping community in which the Bible is read and proclaimed, where people pray and praise, where the members are nurtured in the faith.

All this has to be stated unequivocally today, for in some Christian circles the need for the church to be an identifiably separate worshiping community is questioned, where the boundary lines between church and world become blurred, where the church is in danger of becoming just another agency for the betterment of society, and where Christians tend to play down the fact that our salvation today is grounded in the yesterday of God's revelation in Christ crucified and risen, and stretches out towards the tomorrow of our ultimate salvation which likewise comes from God alone. We cannot subscribe to this understanding of the church, nor to an evangelism that omits or neglects the calling of people into the fellowship and membership of the Christian Church.

Does this mean that evangelism is concerned exclusively with spiritual or religious matters, that practicing Christians are defined solely according to their church attendance, Bible reading, praying, and abstaining from certain things? This is the impression one would get from, for instance, Peter Wagner's definition of an evangelical quoted earlier. In that definition all the positive elements have to do with narrowly defined religious activities, and all the **negative** elements (those from which evangelicals should abstain) have to do with the world. There is no reference whatsoever to any positive attitude to or involvement in the world. It is therefore understandable that the Church Growth movement—to which Wagner belongs—would define evangelism as "bringing unbelievers to saving faith in Christ and membership in His Church," and then, in turn, "sending them out to find others." This is described as "a main thrust, perhaps the main thrust of the New Testament" (McGavran, 1980:426). So the purpose of church growth is further church growth. The purpose of becoming a Christian is to help others become Christians. All these activities take place within the narrow confines of the **religious** or the **cultic**. Evangelism results in withdrawal, for the church is regarded as the place where one retreats into a kind of spiritual shelter to meet God away from the harsh realities of the world.

The New Testament church was, however, no introverted religious community. The Greek mystery religions were indeed such exclusively cultic communities. They were referred to as *thiasoi*. The church was, however, never called a *thiasos* but an *ekklesia* (de Beus, 1979:252-253). This Greek term was taken over from the Septuagint, where *ekklesia* was the translation for the Hebrew *qahal* (assembly). Both *qahal* and *ekklesia* are essentially **civil** concepts. The church is simultaneously a sociological and a theological reality, both distinguished from and involved in society. Had this not been the case, had the small group

around Jesus been a *thiasos*, the early Christian confession *Iēsous Kyrios* ("Jesus is Lord!") could scarcely have placed the Christians on a collision course with the Roman government. The Christians confessed, "Christ is **both Redeemer and Lord!**" Had they been members of a *thiasos*, they would at most have said, "Christ is Redeemer."

This means that contrary to the view held by many Christians, conversion is a **broadening**, not a narrowing experience. The inward experience of the convert is part of a much larger total change. *In evangelism, the call to faith in Jesus, the Saviour, is inseparable from the call to submit to him as Lord, not only personal lives and lifestyles but also political and economic systems in the corporate life of society. In evangelism, the free offer of forgiveness and new life is inseparable from the demand to reorientate one's life completely around the values of the kingdom as manifested in the life of Jesus* (Kirk, 1980:139).

We may now return to our earlier attempt at defining the difference between evangelism and mission, in which evangelism was termed a **dimension** of mission, whereas mission was described as everything God sends the church to do for the salvation of the world. We may then say that, in a way, **evangelism is calling people to mission**. True evangelism leads to mission. The narrower view, prevalent among many evangelicals, would rather be that evangelism should lead to further evangelism which in turn should lead to still further evangelism. This understanding of evangelism inevitably gives rise to a privatization of the Christian faith where the greatest good lies in winning people for Christ, and to a spiritualization of the message in which the content of the gospel is separated from its political and social context. It may perhaps be granted that these causes are important, but it is argued that **our** task is evangelism, as if these could be split apart or as if our involvement in the wider mission of God may simply be termed a fruit of conversion, a natural result or outflow of the new life in Christ. Then evangelism—in the narrow, purely religious sense of the word—is referred to as primary, as is the case in the Lausanne Covenant; everything else explicitly or by implication is secondary, and therefore less important.

Behind this entire placing of (narrowly understood) evangelism in priority lies, of course, the domino theory: If Christians become increasingly involved in the total mission of the church in the world, this will inevitably lead to a lessening of commitment to evangelism. However, as Andrew Kirk—himself an evangelical—has pointed out, such reasoning lacks theological depth, for it begs the question as to what the gospel is all about (Kirk, 1980:139). If it is indeed the gospel of the **kingdom**, and if the kingdom is "the detailed expression of [God's] caring control of the whole of life" (Kirk, 1980), then we are concerned in **our evangelism** with a God whose "nature as king [is] to intervene to **satisfy every basic need of man, to uphold justice and equity, to watch over the circumstances of strangers, widows and orphans, and to liberate the poor and the prisoners.**" The kingdom is, after all, "the complete reversal of all the consequences of man's evil: death, disease, plagues, enmity, famine, hate, greed, exploitation, idolatry, oppression, violence, culpable ignorance, prejudice and empty religious practices" (Kirk, 1980:131-132). Evangelism is communicating the gospel of the kingdom, and the goal of God's kingly rule is nothing less than "the complete reclamation and reconstitution of the created universe" (Kirk, 1980:133).

The need for renewal

Evangelism of this kind needs a renewed church. Says Michael Green, *Sometimes when a church has tried everything else—in vain—it comes reluctantly round to the idea that if it is to stay in business it had better resign itself to an evangelistic campaign. If evangelism is anything other than the spontaneous outworking of the fire*

Christ has lit within, it will ring false and achieve nothing (Green, 1979:15). Such a church is not engaged in evangelism, but in propaganda, reproducing carbon copies of itself and imparting its own ghetto mentality to the people it reaches.

The Melbourne Conference identified four characteristics of a renewed church-in-evangelism. It said, "Authentic proclamation will be the spontaneous offering of a church (a) which is a truly worshipping community, (b) which is able to welcome outsiders, (c) whose members offer their service in both church and society, and (d) which is ready to move like a pilgrim" (Report Section III).

This, in fact, means that the church is part of the message it proclaims. The medium is the message! The church has to be a truly alternative community, and alternative to all other human communities. If it is to impart a message of hope and love to the world, something of that hope and love should take shape in the church itself. According to the Book of Acts the early Christian community was characterized by compassion, fellowship, sharing, service, worship, and teaching (Acts 2:42-47; 4:32-35). This radically different and winsome lifestyle itself became a testimony to Christ and the gospel. The Christians did not need to say, "Join us"; people came to the church, drawn as if by a magnet. **We** frequently have to push or pull people into the church. Why? Because our churches lack a winsome lifestyle and societal relevance. So in our evangelism we sometimes resemble a lunatic farmer who carries his harvest into his burning barn.

The point is that people will believe their eyes first. We don't convince them by just telling them nice things. They will never believe even the most beautiful words which are contradicted by the evidence of what they see. The more attractive our verbal message sounds, the more striking will appear its glaring contradiction to what people cannot but **see** in us as individuals and in our structures. "If there is this love among you, then all will know that you are my disciples" (Jn 13:35). Conversely, of course, if this love is not apparent, people will have every reason to doubt whether we are, indeed, Christ's disciples, and they will experience little inclination to draw closer to us.

We cannot, therefore, contemplate evangelism without at the same time contemplating church renewal. One of the most serious weaknesses of Pattaya was that it had been decided in advance that the renewal of the church was not to be a subject for discussion but that all attention should be focused on the practice and strategy of evangelism (Crompton, 1980:13). This is a self-defeating and impermissible procedure.

I deliberately refrain from giving detailed substance to what I mean by a renewed church. True renewal will inevitably lead to **relevance**. Much of what passes for renewal may be totally irrelevant because it is exclusively religious in the narrow sense of the word. Had the early Christian Church been a renewed community in this narrow sense of the word, it would scarcely have caused a ripple on the surface of society. The fact that it did indeed cause more than just a ripple, that it provoked a large-scale

demonstration in Ephesus and caused people in Thessalonica to shout, "The men who have turned the world upside down have come to our city," is sufficient evidence that this renewal movement shook society to its core.

We are faced with the problem of the church's **lack of credibility**. Today particularly the church in the West is characterized by widespread malaise. The church in the West, said Halina Bortnowska at Melbourne, is a sign of **guilt** rather than a sign of **hope** (Bosch, 1980-81; 512-518). This has a paralyzing effect on the church. Christians appear to argue that the church must first be renewed and first become relevant before it can become involved in evangelism. It first has to **earn** credibility and then **prove** it.

All this is true as far as it goes, but it is not the entire truth. Church renewal is not merely a precondition for evangelism but also a concomitant to it, as much as evangelism can also be referred to as both a precondition for and a concomitant to renewal. The church is renewed as it evangelizes; the church evangelizes as it is renewed (Haarsma, 1980:6).

Thus, if the gospel is indeed gospel, "good spell," good news (the news of **God** renewing people, individuals, communities, relationships), evangelism will mean the emergence of radiant people whose involvement in all of reality is not the result of a command telling them to do what they have to do, but rather the spontaneous overflow of "walking in the **newness of life**" (Rom 6:4) that they have been **given**.

References cited

Alexander, John

- 1980 "Evangelism?" *The Other Side*, Vol. 16, No. 12, December 1980

Barth, Karl

- 1962 *Church Dogmatics IV/3* Edinburgh: T & T Clark

Bosch, David J.

- 1980 *Witness to the World: The Christian Mission in Theological Perspective* London: Marshall, Morgan and Scott

- 1980- "The Melbourne Conference: Between Guilt and
81 Hope," *International Review of Mission*, Vol. LXIX, Nos. 267-277, October 1980-January 1981

- 1981 "In Search of Mission: Reflection on Melbourne' and 'Pattaya,'" *Missionalia*, Vol. 9, No. 1, April 1981

Christianity Today

- 1980 Editorial, *Christianity Today*, Vol. XXIV, No. 14, August 8, 1980

Cook, Richard B.

- Paul, the Organizer* (mimeographed)

Crompton, Derek

- 1980 *In New Vision*, August 1980

de Beus, Ch.

- 1979 *Komst en Toekomst van het Koninkrijk Heemstede*

Douglas, J. D. (Ed.)

- 1975 "Lausanne Covenant," *Let the Earth Hear His Voice* Minneapolis: World Wide Publications

Green, Michael

- 1979 *Evangelism—Now and Then* Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press

Haarsma, F.

- 1980 "Evangelisatie en Kerkopbouw," *Kosmos & Oecumene*, Vol. 14, No. 1

Kirk, J. Andrew

- 1980 "The Kingdom, the Church and a Distressed World," *Churchman*, Vol. 94, No. 2

Krass, Alfred C.

- 1978 *Five Lanterns at Sundown: Evangelism in a Chastened Mood* Grand Rapids: Eerdmans

Margull, Hans J.

- 1977 "Presence and Proclamation," *The Conciliar-Evangelical Debate: The Crucial Documents 1964-76*, edited by D. A. McGavran. Pasadena: William Carey Library

McGavran, Donald A.

- 1980 *Understanding Church Growth* Grand Rapids: Eerdmans

Nationwide Initiative in Evangelism

- 1980 *Evangelism: Convergence and Divergence*, published by the Nationwide Initiative in Evangelism (NIE), 146 Queen Victoria St., London EC4V 4BX, September 1980

Ortiz, Juan Carlos

- 1980 *Disciple*, quoted by Waldron Scott in *Bring Forth Justice* Grand Rapids: Eerdmans

Packer, James I.

- 1961 *Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God* London: Inter-Varsity Fellowship

Scott, Waldron

- 1980 *Bring Forth Justice* Grand Rapids: Eerdmans

Stendahl, Krister

- 1976 *Paul among Jews and Gentiles and other Essays* Philadelphia: Fortress Press

Stott, John

- 1975 *Christian Mission in the Modern World* London: Falcon

Wagner, C. Peter

- 1971 *Frontiers in Missionary Strategy* Chicago: Moody Press

- 1979 *Our Kind of People: The Ethical Dimensions of Church Growth in America* Atlanta: John Knox

Warren, Max

- 1977 "Presence and Proclamation," *The Conciliar-Evangelical Debate: The Crucial Documents 1964-76*, edited by D. A. McGavran. Pasadena: William Carey Library

Theron, P. F.

- 1978 *Die Ekklesia as Kosmies-Eskatologiese Teken* Pretoria: N. G. Kerkboekhandel

Yoder, John H.

- 1980 "The Apostle's Apology Revisited," *The New Way of Jesus*, edited by William Klassen. Newton, Kansas: Faith and Life Press

Evangelism by the Lifestyle of the Congregation: A Study of Evangelism as Pictured in the Pastoral Epistles

PAUL M. MILLER

Evangelism by lifestyle: thrust of the Pastorals

"Do the work of an evangelist" (2 Tim 4:5) is the last commission of the Apostle Paul, reported just before his discussion of his coming death. The early Christians who assembled these fragments from his writings undoubtedly did so because they treasured them as his guidance for evangelism by the lifestyle of a congregation. Paul likely depended less upon the near return of Christ than on pondering in his later years the style of life or the kind of congregational meetings which would be needed to evangelize their neighborhoods in a non-Jewish world.

The purpose of the Pastorals—"This letter will let you know how you should conduct yourself in God's household, which is the church of the living God..." (1 Tim 3:15)—links closely with the closing instruction to Timothy: "Do the work of an evangelist" (2 Tim 4:5). Timothy knew how to do evangelism when single men like himself and Paul itinerated from place to place to found churches. He also had to learn to do it in an established congregation of families, relying upon the quiet miracles of the style of life they lived together from day to day.

Congregational gatherings and style of life are set right in the sequence of the other, miraculous, mighty acts of God! In congregational worship, persons are in the presence of the God who sent Jesus in the past and will judge everyone in the future (2 Tim 4:1). The meeting is another awesome moment in salvation history.

Over and over again the Pastorals list the recitals of the mighty acts of God, which were a regular part of every congregational meeting for worship. First Timothy 2:3-7 retells the acts of God who desires people to be saved, who gave a mediator, who gave his life, who appointed preachers. First Timothy 3:16 traces the living God who acted in the flesh in the incarnation, was seen by angels, was testified to by the Holy Spirit, preached, believed upon, and was received back into glory. First Timothy 4:10 retells several of God's mighty acts, in sending the Savior, in transforming the person who believes, and in arousing hope for the future. The First Timothy 6:16-21 passage adds Pilate's trial to the recital and continues the story on into the eternal glory in the future.

In the Pastorals the congregation's lifestyle is compared to that of a soldier in that it demands the same total devotion "to this and nothing else"; the same "readiness for the ultimate sacrifice"; to "obey without question"; and to "endure hardness" (2 Tim 2:3-4). The congregation also refused to entangle itself with affairs of this life unrelated to its supreme task. Here is the "moral equivalent of war" with its ability to save lives rather than to destroy.

The lifestyle is compared also to the all-consuming self-discipline and group discipline usually achieved only by the athlete, and to the hard work and patience usually expected only of the farmer. Congregational evangelism is to shape

a lifestyle more powerfully and totally than can an army, a ball team, or the demands of farming (2 Tim 2:5-6).

Just as farmers dare not quit during drought, pestilence, or waiting; or athletes cannot quit when the game is going against them; or soldiers must go on when their lives are threatened; so the congregational program and style of life focused to evangelism may never take time out. Evangelism is not an option which the congregation is free to ignore.

Many people claim that renewal and revival must be achieved first; then efforts can begin toward evangelism. On the contrary, the Pastorals imply that every act of life together must be part of the living God's program to save people, and must continue to be so even though deadness and apostasy are besetting on every side.

In the same letters which climax in the Great Commission to evangelize, apostasy and backsliding are referred to twenty times—once in every twelve verses! Some are wandering into futile discussion sessions (1 Tim 1:6); others are being delivered to Satan for their blasphemy (1 Tim 1:20); a recent convert is failing to grow under responsibility and is merely swelling in pride (1 Tim 3:6); demonic teachings about celibacy and asceticism intrude (1 Tim 4:5); a stingy relative is denying the faith by refusing mutual aid (1 Tim 5:8); some widows are turning to gossip (1 Tim 5:13); scientific talk is fooling some persons (1 Tim 6:20-21); and love of money is snaring others (1 Tim 6:9).

Part of the lifestyle of the congregation is this constant dialogue, decision making, and two-way movement. Converts are coming to join the fellowship, and backsliders are turning away. The lifestyle is that of a group being purged of pride, blasphemy, asceticism, love of money, stinginess, error, love of the world, and cowardice. The preaching, brotherly admonition, and enduring of the quitting by the cowards is part of what the congregation does when it gathers. Decision making for and against Christ's call—and for and against the living God's program of saving love—is a dominant activity and mood of the meeting. The master commitment to accept Christ as Savior and Lord, which is the essence and goal of evangelism, should happen in such situations.

A deciding, covenant community

Every person needs, deeply and profoundly, the style of life made possible by the love community. Not many persons today are aware of this. But Paul and his readers know well how important vital group life is to the sanity and happiness of humankind.

*Paul M. Miller teaches practical theology at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries, Elkhart, Indiana. His most recent book is *Leading the Family of God* (Herald Press, 1981).*

Notions of an extended family or of the elders role within the clan are brought into the church fellowship and heighten the family-of-God reality (1 Tim 5:1-2). Sacrificial sharing for one another's needs is stressed (1 Tim 5:8). Members pool their giving to support the leaders they have chosen from their own midst. Members discern one another's gifts, rebuke one another's failures and sins, and seek to serve one another's total needs. Neither joys nor sufferings nor sinings of members are private affairs! No one sought merely to save souls without saving the whole person.

A recent convert to Christianity may have come in from a culture in which male dominance prevailed in the families and slave owners dominated the economic system. The convert is helped to start to function prophetically and Christianly within his situation. The power of God at work within the covenanted community, the congregation, is relied upon to correct the wrongs which are wrecking society. Within the church fellowship the believer gains the courage, the ideas, and the power with which to introduce creative changes in the structures of society (1 Tim 2:8-15 and 1 Tim 6:1-10).

Timothy's own movement from innocence through nurture in the home, conversion, and sharing in congregational life is held up as something of an ideal. Yet the reader never knows whether it was the power of congregational discussions, or testimonies, or preaching services, or prayers, or screening of volunteers, or freeing from taboos, or scrutiny of leaders, or ministering to suffering, or dealing with love of money, or confronting persecution, or exposing the counterfeit. Any or all of these might have been little conversions along the way during the youthful experiences of Timothy.

The same series of preaching-teaching-discussion-decision meetings serve to acquaint converts (or the children) with sacred writings, to call them to a salvation commitment, and at the same time to equip adult members for every good work of witness in the world (2 Tim 3:15-16). Evangelizing the unbeliever and equipping the church member for mission seem to be blended.

Congregations which gather for preaching-teaching-discussion-decision can:

- engage in reproof and correction (2 Tim 3:16);
- discern the qualifications of a member to serve as deacon or bishop (1 Tim 3:1-13);
- decide which widow should receive mutual aid (1 Tim 5:16);
- determine how to intercede for a given king in a certain situation (1 Tim 2:2);
- decide which silly myths of their culture they must refuse (1 Tim 1:4 and 4:6-7);
- hear the prophets give their utterances or see hands of commissioning laid upon a certain member (1 Tim 4:14);
- see two or three witnesses bring a charge against one of the congregational elders and watch as the leader is treated fairly and tenderly through it all (1 Tim 5:19);
- witness the solemn ceremonies of the laying-on-of-hands in binding-and-loosing-baptism or commissioning services (1 Tim 5:22);
- watch as slave and master interact as equals in the congregation (1 Tim 6:1-2);
- rebuke the person who tries to make godliness a means of gain (1 Tim 6:5).

When gatherings have such content and reality, then participants are drawn in deeply. Likely some observers long to be a part of a fellowship of such beauty and mutual

helpfulness. It is possible also that mere shallow triflers will be frightened away! Faith is not so much belief in a doctrine of justification as it is faithfulness in being a new community of God's love and grace.

Bitter experiences become uniting ties as well as the pleasant ones do. While it is a sacred and pleasant experience to help to commission a fellow believer for a task, it is a sobering and painful experience to discover later on that the congregation has laid hands on the person too hastily and so was a partaker in hidden sins (1 Tim 5:22)! A group becomes a group not only by rejoicing with those who rejoice but by weeping with those who weep. Slowly a person comes to trust the body of Christ. The Pastorals never mention the eucharist or the Lord's Supper as a bond of fellowship, probably because the church was being tempted to accept a magical unity created by a sacramental wafer, rather than a personal oneness shared by life in a group. The church dared not become merely another mystery cult in which oneness is produced by acts of magic. All the basic errors of Marcion are opposed in the Pastorals, but attention is upon honest congregational life and not upon fighting either the Marconites or the mystery religions.

Debate and confrontation with the world

Christ regarded his times of confrontation with opponents as a real part of his evangelism. A case can be made for the claim that Christ sought confrontation at times. Paul rejoiced at the opportunities he got by being arrested and placed on public trial. The same attitude pervades the Pastorals. It is not enough merely to live a Christ-like life. Evil must be confronted.

But the Christian debater must embody the life of the nonresistant Christ, ever overcoming evil with good, even during debate. Any correcting of an opponent must be done with gentleness (2 Tim 2:25). The Christian dare never become quarrelsome but must remain kind to everyone, refusing to enter arguments which are stupid, senseless, or filled with youthful passion (2 Tim 2:22-24). In fact, the spirit of worship, "calling on the Lord with a pure heart," should pervade any argument in which a believer engages. Peacemaking should be a goal along with clarifying of God's righteous will and call, so that a faith response may happen. The church leader is an apt teacher when correcting opponents. Street protests which involve angry shouting would not seem to fulfill the ideal.

There is no hint as to which controversies are senseless and should be avoided. Few Bible writers gave priority to attacking the structures of society under which they found themselves. Neither in the Pastorals nor in other New Testament writings are there debates about systems of economics, labor organization, political groups, structures for communication or distribution, or even structures for society's education, taxation, or recreation.

Undoubtedly, many church members spoke words of prophetic truth to people in power. Some members of the congregation likely confronted in more head-on fashion the various heresies, errors, and wrongs which are obvious in the background of the Epistles. Gnostic dualism, Jewish legalism, Stoic self-sufficiency, hierarchical leadership, oppressive government, godliness-as-a-means-of-gain materialism, militarism, and many other wrongs abounded. But the creation of a congregational lifestyle, a practical demonstration of what life can be like when people live together in love, was the true city set on a hill which could not be hid. Evangelists were to concentrate upon producing

love-communities, congregations whose entire style of life helped bring people to Christ, rather than to compass land and sea to make a proselyte.

Doing evangelism while enduring injustice

Paul insisted that evangelism was not hindered because he was fettered, suffering like a criminal. Rather he saw his patient enduring of suffering as one means by which God evangelizes the elect. Paul placed his suffering alongside the goal that people may obtain salvation which is in Jesus Christ (2 Tim 2:9-10). Elsewhere Paul inferred that the evangelist's suffering can in some mysterious way coincide with Christ's redemptive suffering so that the evangelist can fill up in his own body the sufferings of the Lord Jesus for his church. The grace given in Christ ages ago is the same which enabled Timothy to take his share of suffering (1 Tim 1:8-9).

Triumphant certainties seem to gain new clarity when evangelists actually suffer. Life and death with Christ, suffering for Christ and reigning with him, and the equally vivid reality that one can drop out by denying Christ become piercingly real during suffering. The experience of God's infinite faithfulness can become a new unfettered word, a fresh revelation of God's actual grace and power in one's own experience (2 Tim 2:11-13).

Paul was imprisoned and treated like a common criminal, and likely his own experiences of injustice, police brutality, corrupt politics, and abuses of the poor gave him a deep compassion for people. He endured it all as his own share in God's gospel of suffering love. He pondered in horror what society did to a people when it forced them to disentangle themselves from family and all they held dear for the sake of the utterly wretched and wrong business of war.

The story of a lonely Christian woman whose quiet nurture produced a Timothy, a congregation which was considerate of its widows, an Onesimus who came so as to refresh a tired prisoner, a rich man willing to live in the uncluttered simplicity of his birth and death days, a congregation which remained loving even while apostates turned to attack it, a congregation discussing how to intercede for their rulers, a congregation enabling the slave and master to discuss freely the fact that God's Spirit was cre-

ating a lifestyle like this was all part of Paul's gospel. The possibility of a covenant community trying to do God's will on earth as it is done in heaven is gospel news—the really new thing. The present miracle of love's community-creating power is a part of the news, the gospel.

Preaching the gospel

Some ask sincerely whether preaching is still valid, now that it is being admitted that God achieves his desire to save people primarily by creating new, unexplainable communities. Does not God bring salvation to all people by first telling a leader "how to behave thyself in the household of God"? The answer is **Yes**.

Yet preaching remains supremely important, even within the covenanted and evangelizing community. Paul himself put it central in his own work: "I was appointed a preacher" (1 Tim 2:7). The central qualification for a leader (beyond spiritual maturity expected of every believer) is still "an apt teacher" (1 Tim 3:2). Good leaders "put these instructions before the brethren" (1 Tim 4:6). Public gatherings center around reading, preaching, and teaching the Scriptures (1 Tim 4:13). Elders who labor in both preaching and teaching are the ones to receive extra support (1 Tim 5:17). Christian duties must be taught and urged in the gatherings (1 Tim 6:2). Leaders are "to guard the truth entrusted" (2 Tim 1:14). The gospel itself is thought of as a preached gospel (2 Tim 2:8). The profitableness of the Scriptures is realized through teaching and reproof (2 Tim 3:16).

The first charge to a central leader is to preach the Word (2 Tim 4:2). Through preaching is God's Word manifested (Tit 1:3). An application of the Scriptures to life is to be done with all authority (Tit 2:15). The Pastorals give no comfort to anyone who wishes to belittle preaching or to prove that it is valid only for proclaiming the Kerygma to unbelievers. Apparently preaching remains central within the believing, covenanted, evangelizing congregation, even when the presence of a new covenanted community of divine love is a vital part of the gospel itself. The proclamation of the mighty acts of God needs to punctuate all the discussion sessions of the congregation. It is a part of the style of life of God's people.

Evangelism by Lifestyle

DAVID EWERT

The early church lived as a minority in the midst of a non-Christian society. The members of the new people of God were conscious of their calling to "let (their) light so shine before men, that they may see (their) good works and give glory to (their) Father who is in heaven," as Jesus had taught (Mt 5:16). They sought to fulfill this high calling in both word and deed. The spoken word, they felt, could not be effective unless it was backed up by a godly life. On the other hand, the apostles reminded the believers that they must always be ready to give "a reason for the hope that is in us." Proclamation and lifestyle were of the same piece.

In this essay we want to underscore the significance of letting our "manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ," if our verbal witness is to have credence and authenticity. Our formal witness to Christ will ring hollow without the informal, the life. Unless we live winsomely in our neighborhood, people will tend to turn a deaf ear to our proclamation of the gospel.

Anyone who stresses evangelism by lifestyle is open to the charge that he or she is minimizing the significance of the verbal witness. While the spoken word is never really effective unless it is backed up by a life, it is also true, as Elton Trueblood said, "that the living deed is never adequate without the support which the spoken word can provide. This is because no life is ever good enough. The person who says naively, 'I don't preach; I just let my life speak,' is insufferably self-righteous" (Trueblood, 1961:53). As Samuel Shoemaker said, "I cannot by being good, tell of Jesus' atoning death and resurrection," (Shoemaker, 1958:51). We do not want to create a dichotomy between word and deed. But, having made that clear, we now turn to our topic which puts the emphasis on the deed.

The apostles underscored Christian lifestyle in order to strengthen the witness of the church. In doing so they set themselves in the tradition of the prophets who castigated the old-covenant people for profaning God's name among the nations by their profligate ways (Is 52:5; Ezek 36:20; quoted in Rom 2:24). Israel's misconduct, not its misfortunes, had led Gentiles to conclude that the God of Israel was of no account. In similar vein the members of the Qumran community were warned to be careful in their dealings with Gentiles, "lest they blaspheme" (Vermès, 1975:114). This concern for the good name of Christ and of his people was expressed even more strongly in the epistolary literature of the apostles.

Paul, for example, confessed that he and his colleagues "endure anything rather than put an obstacle in the way of the gospel of Christ" (1 Cor 9:12). He had refused to accept remuneration for his services from the Corinthians, fearing that his motives for preaching the gospel might be misconstrued. He wanted to avoid everything that could possibly hinder the progress of the gospel. The word

egkope (obstacle) was used in military practice for breaking up the road to hold up a pursuing enemy. Hence the basic meaning is "to block the way" (Stählin, 1965:855-60). So concerned was he that the gospel have free course, that any consideration of his own rights, his wishes, or sufferings were driven into the background.

In his second letter to the Corinthians Paul again claimed that he and his associates "put no obstacle in any one's way, so that no fault may be found with (their) ministry" (2 Cor 6:3). The verbal noun *proskope* (obstacle) is a compound meaning literally to strike or dash against, to stumble against something, to bump oneself. In the figurative sense it means to give offense to another, to give reason for antipathy (Stählin, 1968:745-57).

Paul then proceeded to speak of the hardships he endured, the integrity with which he lived, the love with which he treated people, and a host of other things he did in order that he might commend the gospel to others, and to keep his ministry from being vilified.

Not only did Paul himself seek to live winsomely, but he exhorted his readers to do likewise. Writing to the Corinthians he cautioned, "Give no offense to Jews or to Greeks or to the church of God" (1 Cor 10:32). Jews and Greeks represent the unbelieving neighbors, in contrast to the church of God. To be without offense (*aproskopoi*) means to avoid everything that could keep people from the faith, and thus to prevent their salvation. It means to be pleasant and obliging to unbelievers, so that they will be attracted to the Christian faith. To live without offense in the midst of a "crooked and perverse generation" must be a guiding principle for all believers if they want to see men and women come to Christ.

The question before us, then, is to discover from the letters of Peter and Paul (other apostolic writers have less to say on this matter, and the Pastorals have already been dealt with by Paul Miller) the significance of lifestyle for evangelism.

In an article on the significance of the reaction of non-Christians for the spread of the gospel in the early church, W.C. van Unnick concluded, "It is a sign that God and the Gospel were taken desperately seriously in daily life, that people saw the danger that the life-style of a Christian could be a hindrance to the Gospel" (van Unnick, 1960:234. My translation).

Sensitivity to people's feelings

Paul claimed that he "pleases all men in everything" (1 Cor 10:33), so that he might win them for Christ. The present tense of the verb *aresko* (please) should be taken in the conative sense, which means that Paul tried to please everyone in all things. He was not claiming that he always succeeded (Barrett, 1968:245).

Formally such a statement is at variance with Galatians 1:10, where the apostle protested the charge that he was a man-pleaser. "If I were still pleasing men," he wrote, "I should not be a servant of Christ." Paul refused to trim the truth of the gospel to please his audience (according to Gal 1:10), but he sought to please people with respect to their feelings regarding customs and mores (according to 1 Cor 10:33).

David Ewert teaches at Mennonite Brethren Biblical Seminary, Fresno, California. For a number of years he taught at Mennonite Brethren Bible College, Winnipeg, Manitoba, and at Eastern Mennonite Seminary, Harrisonburg, Virginia. He has also had teaching missions in other countries. His most recent book is And Then Comes the End (Herald Press, 1980).

To please is misunderstood if read in the sense of currying favor. In an inscription from antiquity the word **please** was used in the sense of "being a benefactor to others" (Robertson and Plummer, 1916:224). Paul in fact explained forthwith that in seeking to please others he was not seeking his own advantage but theirs. Lest the word **advantage** be misconstrued, he added, "that they might be saved." It was not simply a matter of ingratiating himself with people, but of befriending them in order to lead them to Christ. "Das *proskomma* ist hier etwas, wodurch Menschen vom Heil agbehalten werden" (van Unnick, 1960:229).

Ignatius of Antioch recalled these words of Paul in his letter to the Trallians, written at the beginning of the second century, when he reminded the servants of Christ that they ought "to please everyone in every respect" (Trall. 2.3).

Paul would "allow no attitudes or practices of his own to stand between the truth of the gospel and those he seeks to win" (Bruce, 1971:101). Earlier, in 1 Corinthians 9:19-23, Paul had given some of the details of what he meant by seeking to please others. Although he was a free man, he made himself a slave to all. The language is an echo of Jesus' words in Mark 10:45, and it prompted Luther's paradoxical saying in his *Liberty of a Christian Man*: "A Christian man is a most free lord of all, subject to none. A Christian man is a most dutiful servant of all, subject to all."

Paul respected the customs of those among whom he moved: "To the Jew I became as a Jew." He was a Jew by birth and upbringing, but he had become a Christian. However, he avoided everything that would antagonize his Jewish countrymen. He respected Jewish scruples. He even had Timothy circumcized, although circumcision was not the heart of the matter of salvation. Paul took part in the discharge of a Nazarite vow in the temple in Jerusalem. When he was with Jews he respected their food laws, even though he held that the dietary laws were *passé*. He confined himself to kosher meat out of consideration for Jewish scruples, even though he regarded all foods to be clean. Why all this concern to please the Jew? "In order to win Jews!"

Among Gentiles Paul behaved quite differently, for to win Gentiles he had to drop Jewish practices. Of course, it should not be overlooked that in adapting to both Jewish and Gentile sensibilities, Paul never sacrificed ethical principles. He explained that he was not an outlaw of God but an inlaw of Christ. Christ taught that the law and the prophets were subsumed in the fundamental law of love for God and neighbor. By this law Paul lived. Personal considerations were totally submerged in his desire to win others: "I have become all things to all men, that I might by all means save some." The word **save** is significant here, for it explicates what is meant by winning others. Making friends was not an end in itself for Paul. He wanted to win them for Christ so that he might have them as friends forever.

Some may have regarded this desire to please others as inconsistent, but such adaptability was quite consistent with Paul's overriding purpose to save both Jews and Gentiles.

Paul's instructions on what to do when an unbelieving neighbor invited a Corinthian Christian for dinner is a concrete example of what it means to be sensitive to people's feelings. Paul's advice was that they eat whatever is set before them, without asking questions about where the

meat had come from (1 Cor 10:27).

Paul forbade table-fellowship with immoral church members (1 Cor 5:9-12), but not with the immoral of this world. These are the objects of the church's mission, and if they are to be won, believers must befriend them and not shy away from eating with them.

How careful we ought to be in our contacts with unbelievers, lest we hurt their feelings. What an agenda this provides for missionaries entering other cultures! One cannot treat the practices of other people with disdain and hope to win them for the gospel. How one dresses, how one greets, how one eats, or how one reacts to accepted traditions determines in large measure whether one will find a way to the hearts of others. If we want to be winsome, we must be sensitive to the feelings of our non-Christian neighbors.

Integrity in ethical matters

That Paul and his associates were at times accused of dishonesty, greed, or pride can be seen from his defense in 1 Thessalonians 2:1-12. Paul and his co-workers had not used deceit or trickery in their efforts to win the Thessalonians for Christ, Paul claimed. They had never used flattery in their attempt to make converts, nor had they asked for money, nor sought after praise. Rather, they had been gentle among them and had cared for their new converts as a mother tenderly cares for her children. Day and night they had given themselves to serving the Thessalonians. Lest they be accused of having pecuniary interests, the apostles had worked with their own hands to earn their daily bread. They did not want to be a burden to the Thessalonians in any way, or to make demands that would lay the missionaries open to charges of self-interest.

Why this elaborate defense? For the simple reason that their mission efforts could be ruined if the bad rumors which enemies of the Christian faith were spreading should prove to be true. If it could be shown that Paul, Silas, and Timothy were like the many other charlatans that traveled from city to city seeking to pawn off their ideas for a fee, their mission was doomed.

The kind of ethical integrity which Paul claimed for himself and his colleagues was expected of his converts also. "Conduct yourselves wisely toward outsiders," he wrote to the Colossians (Col 4:5). Plenty of distorted accounts of Christian behavior floated around, and believers were to give the lie to these by their manner of life. *Even today it is true that the reputation of the gospel is bound up with the conduct of those who claim to have experienced its saving power. Non-Christians may not read the Bible or listen to the preaching of the word of God; but they can see the lives of those who do, and form their judgment accordingly* (Bruce, 1957:299).

Believers expected to suffer for their faith, but they were to make sure, as Peter warned, that they never suffered for crimes they themselves had committed. "But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or a thief, or a wrong-doer, or as a mischief-maker" (1 Pet 4:15). Mischief-maker translates a rare Greek word (*allotriepiskopos*) which means to meddle or interfere with someone else's business. It may have been aimed at overly enthusiastic Christians who harshly denounced pagan habits and thereby made unbelievers angry, or those who showed excessive zeal for making converts and, as a result, prejudiced people against the gospel.

Christian slaves were told that there was no credit if they "do wrong and are beaten for it" (1 Pet 2:20). They were

to make sure, when they suffered, that it was for the sake of their faith and not for wrongs they had done, "for it is better to suffer for doing right, if that should be God's will, than for doing wrong" (1 Pet 3:17).

A good many years ago a member of a Mennonite Brethren congregation in the Midwest sold a milk cow to a non-Christian neighbor. The price was fair, but the seller deliberately suppressed the fact that the cow gave little milk. Upon discovering that he had been deceived by a member of the church, the unbelieving neighbor let it be known what he thought of the church. The church then not only disciplined the guilty brother, but bought back the cow and saw to it that the neighbor got a good milk cow. The reputation of the gospel was at stake, and church members took decisive action to preserve the good name of the Christian community.

"Maintain good conduct among the Gentiles," exhorted Peter, "so that in case they speak against you as wrongdoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation" (1 Pet 2:12). Christians were frequently vilified as enemies of society in the early days of the church, because they refused to participate in pagan practices. The way to overcome this hatred and prejudice, explained Peter, was to let non-Christians see their good deeds. The unusual verb *epopteuo* (to see) speaks of an observation for a continuous period. Nor is it just a matter of looking at the good life of the believers, but to come to a conclusion—on the basis of careful observation—that such a life is worth having. The result is that the unbelievers believe and glorify God. It is not quite certain what Peter meant with "the day of visitation," but it could refer to the day when God, in his saving grace, visits the unbeliever who has carefully observed the Christians. The day of visitation would, in that case, be the day of conversion to Christ.

By demonstrating integrity in ethical matters and by doing good to others, Christians exercise a powerful evangelistic influence on their non-Christian neighbors. The serene, silent beauty of a holy life is the most powerful influence in the world, next to the might of the Spirit of God," wrote Blaise Pascal.

Enduring wrongs patiently

When John Wesley was still searching for the assurance of salvation, he was impressed by the Moravians on board the ship which took him to Georgia. He wrote, "If they were pushed, struck, or thrown down, they rose again and went away; but no complaint was found in their mouth" (Snyder, 1980:21). This helped to convince him they had something he lacked which he very much desired.

By suffering wrongs innocently the early church drew many persecutors into the Christian fold. Paul, in imitation of Jesus, claimed, "When reviled, we bless; when persecuted, we endure; when slandered, we try to conciliate" (1 Cor 4:12,13). Here are clear echoes of the Sermon on the Mount.

In his letter to the Romans Paul warned against paying back evil for evil, and then he showed his readers how to turn the enemy of the Christian faith into a friend, namely, by overcoming evil with good (Rom 12:16-21). Quoting Proverbs 25:21f., he counseled, "If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him drink; for by so doing you will heap fiery coals upon his head: (v. 20). Whereas complete unanimity on the meaning of the fiery coals does not exist, the thrust of the passage is this: Treat your

enemy kindly; this may make him ashamed and lead him to repentance.

Peter agreed with Paul in emphasizing that the patient endurance of wrongs has a profound effect on unbelievers. Accusation against the Christians must be dispelled by their noble conduct. Peter exhorted his suffering readers to keep a good conscience, so that, "when you are abused, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame" (1 Pet 3:16). Not retaliation but good behavior is the answer of the suffering church to the abuse heaped upon it.

Suffering for Christ's sake is not a shame (1 Pet 4:16), as long as one suffers for doing right (3:16), for being a Christian (4:16). In fact, the patient suffering of Christ's followers leads unbelievers to ask for the secret of the Christian life. Peter counseled his readers in such a situation to "be prepared to make a defense to any one who calls you to account for the hope that is in you" (1 Pet 3:15).

The church that patiently endured wrongs in the early centuries grew by leaps and bounds. The nonresistant church in the sixteenth century was most effective in evangelism. The suffering Mennonite churches in the Soviet Union have registered more conversions in the last quarter century than those of the free West.

Ignatius exhorted his Ephesian readers, "Keep on praying for others, too, for there is a chance of their being converted . . . Return their bad temper with gentleness; their boasts with humility; their abuse with prayer" (10:1,2).

The preacher in Second Clement made the observation that when the heathen hear that Christians are commanded to love their enemies and those who hate them they are amazed "at such surpassing goodness. But when they see that we fail to love not only those who hate us, but even those who love us, then they mock at us and scoff at the Name" (13:4). The apostles were concerned that this should not happen, and, therefore, they admonished the believers to endure wrongs patiently and not to pay back evil with evil.

Being honorable citizens

Whereas the believer is a citizen of a heavenly commonwealth (Phil 3:20) and gives supreme allegiance to Christ as Lord, he or she does not serve the cause of mission by poor citizenship. (It is, of course, understood that when Caesar's demands conflict with Christ's, the Christian obeys "God rather than men.")

Paul exhorted his Roman readers to obey the laws of the land "and (they) will receive approval" (Rom 13:3). If people do wrong, naturally, they must expect punishment. However, believers respect the law not simply to avoid punishment, but for conscience sake (v. 5). Included in good citizenship are the payment of taxes, respect for authorities, and the repayment of debts. One debt, of course, always remains, and that is the obligation to love one's neighbor.

The charge that the Christian faith made bad citizens out of believers was common in the early centuries, and Christians were admonished to do all they could in good conscience to dispel such false charges.

Peter wrote in similar vein, "Be subject for the Lord's sake to every human institution whether it be the emperor as supreme, or to governors as sent by him to punish those who do wrong and to praise those who do right. For it is

God's will that by doing right you should put to silence the ignorance of foolish men" (1 Pet 2:13-15). Good citizenship would not only win Christians the esteem of the public, but also give the lie to their calumniators, whose charges against them stemmed from ignorance. Christians were warned not to misinterpret their freedom in Christ to mean that they could take liberties with the laws of the land (v. 16). (The distinction between the command to fear God and to honor the emperor suggests that the believer's highest allegiance is to God.)

Good citizenship would also include active participation in the work-a-day world. If non-Christians were asked to support Christians financially, a real barrier to the gospel would be erected. This evidently had happened in Thessalonica. Some Thessalonian believers, so it seems, had given up working because they thought the Lord's coming was around the corner. The result was that, with time heavy on their hands, they became busybodies. Not only were they making a nuisance of themselves, but they soon found themselves without food, and so they became dependent on their neighbors for their livelihood. They were becoming parasites, as it were. Paul urged them to go back to work, to live quietly, and to mind their own affairs (1 Thess 4:11). Why? Two reasons were given: "So that they may command the respect of outsiders and be dependent on nobody" (v. 12).

The believer must therefore always live with an eye to the outsider. The believer must so live in the eyes of the public that the gospel is commended by his or her manner of life. To walk *euschemonos* (orderly, becoming) does not mean simply that the Christian's life is a matter of good appearance, but rather that unbelievers cannot justifiably criticize Christians for their manner of life. "*Euschemon* denotes the external aspect of the Christian life" (Greeven, 1974:771). Paul wanted nothing to happen in the lives of church members that would bring the name Christian into disrepute (Rom 13:13).

Eugene Nida pointed out that any real church growth depends on the life of the laity in the work-a-day world. "Formal communication is rarely as important as informal sharing—for example the casual remarks people make about their faith and the opinions and rumors that spread about the behavior of church members" (Nida, 1965:180).

Gentleness in human relations

For people who have come to know the truth, it is all too easy to become overbearing and to speak disrespectfully to and of those who are still in darkness. Also, those who have been delivered from evil habits are tempted to denounce those who are still in bondage to sin and to inveigh against the pagan practices of society in such a way that unbelievers are offended, rather than drawn closer to the faith.

Paul, therefore, exhorted the Colossians to walk wisely with respect to the outsiders and then added, "Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer every one" (Col 4:6).

Where people have experienced God's grace, their language should reflect this. A debtor to grace must not speak boastfully but humbly to fellow sinners. He or she must not denigrate them. Brusque and discourteous behavior is not fitting for saints.

Unbelievers will question Christ's followers about their manner of life, and so, when answering, believers are to season their speech with salt. Perhaps the simplest meaning

of this metaphor is this: Just as food is seasoned to make it appetizing, so the Christian's speech should be palatable. "It is too much to equate 'salt' with wit, but it is not too much to say that our answers should compel interest and attention. Piquancy is an important characteristic of speech that wins people" (R. C. Lucas, 1980:15). Not only must filthy conversation be avoided (Eph 4:29), but our words must become carriers of grace.

Peter said something similar in his admonition to his readers to defend their faith "with gentleness and reverence" (1 Pet 3:15). This admonition finds application particularly in a situation where a believing wife or husband has an unbelieving spouse. There were situations where the unbelieving spouse might want to leave the believing partner, and Paul's advice was that the believer must let the unbeliever go, for "how do you know whether you will save him (her)?" (1 Cor 7:16). Another way of reading that verse is this: Stay with your unbelieving spouse as long as he or she will allow; perhaps you can win him or her for the faith.

But how could a believing wife, for example, win an unbelieving husband? By constantly reminding him of his sins? By threatening him with hell-fire? By denying him conjugal duties? Peter's advice was that unbelieving husbands "may be won without a word by the behavior of their wives" (1 Pet 3:1). "When they see your reverent and chaste behavior," Peter added, they will be encouraged to turn to Christ. Not nagging, but gentleness and submissiveness will win the husband over. Not gaudy dress, but that "gentle and quiet spirit, which in God's sight is very precious," will draw the husband to Christ.

In Justin's *Apology* we are told that Gentiles, for whom the name *Christos* was but a proper name (rather than Messiah as Jews would think of it), tended to confuse it with *chrestos*, meaning gentle or kind. Justin saw apologetic value in this confusion and wrote, "Indeed as far as the name charged against us goes, we are very gracious people" (4:1). If only that could be said of all those who name the name of Christ in our day, we would see a great forward thrust in evangelism!

The good reputation of the church

The believer is part of the Christian community, and his or her manner of life in the world contributes to or destroys the reputation of the church. Once a church has acquired a bad name, its witness to outsiders is seriously impaired. On the other hand, if all the members of the church covenant with each other to live winsomely in their community, a good foundation for the progress of the gospel has been laid.

That Paul was concerned about the reputation of the churches he had founded can be illustrated, for example, from this first letter to the Corinthians. Paul was shocked to hear that grievances in the Corinthian church were being settled in court "before the unrighteous" (1 Cor 6:1ff). The apostle was not raising the question of whether pagan judges were righteous in their judgments of Christians or not, but they were unbelievers (v. 6), and the reputation of the church would be ruined if it washed its soiled linen in public.

Among Jews it was considered highly improper to have Gentile courts rule in matters pertaining to Jewish life. How much more should the church be concerned that its internal problems be resolved by the congregation and not be publicized in the community! A church which allows

members to get even by suing one another will hardly attract the non-Christian.

The early apologists argued for the acceptability of the gospel largely on the ground of the new way of life Christians lived. Athanagoras, for example wrote, *With us . . . you will find unlettered people, tradesmen and old women, who, though unable to express in words the advantages of our teaching, demonstrate by their acts the value of their principle, for they do not rehearse speeches, but evidence good deeds. When struck, they do not strike back; when robbed, they do not sue; to those who ask, they give, and they love their neighbors as themselves* (Richardson, 1953:310).

In his exhortations to Corinthian women who were discarding the customary head covering when they gathered for worship (1 Cor 11:1ff), Paul's concern again was that the church's reputation be upheld. What would non-Christians think of a new faith that undermined and destroyed what was considered good custom? Christians must be careful not to shock people's sense of decency by the way they dress. Such action could prejudice outsiders against the gospel.

Also, in the matter of speaking in tongues, Paul was concerned about the reactions of the outsiders. "If, therefore, the whole church assembles and all speak in tongues, and outsiders or unbelievers enter, will they not say that you are mad?" (1 Cor 14:23). Paul feared that unbelievers might be confirmed in their unbelief if the church practiced glossolalia indiscriminately. For that reason he preferred prophecy, since then the unbeliever is addressed by an intelligible word from God and may be convicted and turn to Christ for salvation (1 Cor 14:24,25).

To show that the early church took the instructions of the apostles on lifestyle as a means of evangelism seriously, we might quote a few lines from an anonymous sermon from the early second century, known as Clement's Second Letter. The writer asked the question of how Christians acknowledge Christ before other people. His answer was, "By doing what he says and not disobeying his commands; by honoring him not only with our lips, but with all our heart and mind" (3:4). A little farther along he commented, *And we must not seek to please men or desire to please only ourselves but by doing what is right to please even outsiders, so that the Name (i.e. the name "Christian") may not be scoffed at on our account . . . For when the heathen hear God's oracles on our lips they marvel at their beauty and greatness. But afterwards, they mark that our deeds are unworthy of the words we utter, they turn from this to scoffing, and say that it is a myth and a delusion* (13:1ff).

At the beginning of the second century, Ignatius, Bishop of Antioch, wrote to the Church of the Trallians, "Do not give the heathen opportunities whereby God's people should be scoffed at through the stupidity of a few" (8:2). He knew how easy it was for a few members of the church to ruin the good reputation of the congregation by their misdemeanors.

In closing let us come back to where we started. Evangelism by lifestyle and evangelism by word of mouth cannot be divorced. Lest we excuse ourselves from a verbal witness on the grounds that we are witnessing by life, let us remind ourselves once more of Colossians 4:5,6, where the exhortation to conduct ourselves wisely toward the outsiders is combined with instructions on our verbal witness. In a recent commentary on Colossians, R. C. Lucas comments on this passage: *Always we must be praying that*

opportunities for the gospel to be preached to them (i.e. the outsiders) be given by God. Always we must gladly take those opportunities, however unpropitious our circumstances. Always we must use the fleeting moments for Christian response when people give us opportunities. And always, however far off in understanding the questioner may be, we must seek the wisdom and grace to answer with words that will awaken his appetite for the things of Christ. (Lucas, 1980:175).

References cited

- Barrett, Charles K.
1968 *A Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians* New York: Harper & Row
- Bruce, Frederick F., and Edmund Kidley Simpson
1957 *Commentary on the Epistles to the Ephesians and the Colossians* Grand Rapids: Eerdmans
- Bruce, Frederick F.
1971 *1 and 2 Corinthians* London: Oliphants
- Greeven, Heinrich
1964 "euschemon," *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, Vol II*, edited by Gerhard Friedrich. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans
- Lucas, R. C.
1980 *Fullness and Freedom: The Message of Colossians and Philemon* Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press
- Nida, Eugene A.
1965 "Dynamics of Church Growth," *Church Growth and Christian Mission*, edited by Donald A. McGavran. New York: Harper & Row
- Richardson, C. C.
1953 *Early Christian Fathers* Philadelphia: Westminster Press
- Robertson, Archibald T., and Alfred Plummer
1916 *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the First Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians* New York: Scribners
- Shoemaker, Samuel M.
1958 *Faith at Work* New York: Hawthorne Books
- Snyder, Howard A.
1980 *The Radical Wesley and Patterns for Church Renewal* Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press
- Stählin, Gustav
1965 "egkope," *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, Vol. III*, edited by Gerhard Friedrich. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans
- 1968 "proskopto," *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, Vol. VI*, edited by Gerhard Friedrich. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans
- Trueblood, Elton
1961 *The Company of the Committed* New York: Harper
- van Unnick, W. C.
1960 "Die Ruecksicht auf die Reaktion der Nicht Christen," *Judentum, Urchristentum, Kirche*, edited by W. Eltester. Berlin: Alfred Töpelmann
- Vermès, Géza
1975 *The Dead Sea Scrolls in English* Harmondsworth: Penguin

In Review

Justice Church: The New Function of the Church in North American Christianity. By Frederick Herzog. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1980, 157 pp., \$6.95 (pb)

Reviewed by LeRoy Friesen

Herzog, an active member of the United Church of Christ and a teacher at Duke University Divinity School, has pioneered the bringing home to North American churches the disconcerting themes of Third World liberation theologies. His principal concern in this book is to demonstrate that the theologies of holistic liberation call not merely for new theological answers, but for an entirely new way for the church to do theology.

The first of six major chapters examines the existing ecclesiologies in North American Protestantism. He finds widespread accommodation to culture, whether in the liberal Tillich's ontological church which is separated from history, or in the isolation of denominational/ethnic enclaves or in the civil religion of conservative churches. This false powerlessness in the church in the face of enormous human need leads Herzog in the second chapter to discuss "Jesus and Power." It is not a new theory or concept of Jesus which is needed, but rather recognition of the lifestyle, the praxis of the historical (Jewish) Jesus which preceded all theory in the first century A.D. All Christology is thus subject to the Christopraxis of identification with the oppressed, those whose physical condition does not allow them to grasp the gospel.

In the third chapter Herzog discusses the major role of Schleiermacher in the failure of modern theology to set forth and embody such a Christopraxis-originated justice church. Schleiermacher's minimizing of the Jewishness of Jesus was indicative of his broader relegation of faith to the sphere of the spiritual (rather than the historical) where it did not engage human social experience.

The fourth chapter is Herzog's discussion of the supersession by the Marxist revolution of a church unwilling to address the issue of power in the manner of Christopraxis. Herzog makes no attempt to identify Marxism with the message of Jesus, but "those who read the Bible ought to have been able to see what Marx saw so well—that the poor and oppressed have a claim on justice. The Marxist revolution holds up a mirror to the church" (p. 76).

In his final two chapters Herzog works on a view of the church which is informed by and is itself a model of the justice praxis of God. "Let the church be the just church," he writes, a people covenanting to join God's struggle for the new age of justice. Only in such a community can society be confronted with the vision of God.

While Herzog in this work is critiquing primarily the liberal Protestant tradition of which he is a part, his call for a Christopraxis-rooted view of the church speaks to all. He clearly confronts a church having a conceptual, theoretical self-understanding with its historical, praxis origins in Jesus Christ. While questions may be raised whether Herzog unduly limits Christopraxis to identification with the oppressed or why he does not elaborate upon the nature of that identification in the first century or the present (the question of violence), the book is an important one for members of a tradition in which peace-justicemaking as a theory isolated from praxis is always a serious temptation.

LeRoy Friesen is associate professor of peace studies at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries, Elkhart, Indiana. He served with Mennonite Central Committee in Jerusalem and Beirut from 1971-1976.

The Jewish People and Jesus Christ: The Relationship Between Church and Synagogue. By Jakob Jocz. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1979, 448 pp., \$7.95 (pb)

Reviewed by Allen R. Guenther

While *Jewish People and Jesus Christ* was not designed as part of the Jewish-Christian dialogue, it lays groundwork which contributes to an understanding of the issues separating Jews and Christians. Jocz accomplishes this task with precision, clarity, frankness, and in an irenic manner.

Jocz focuses clearly on the attitude and relationship of the Jewish people toward Jesus Christ and toward Hebrew Christians. He does not intend nor pretend to chart the history of church-synagogue relationships, nor is this an exhaustive statement on the treatment of Jews by church or society.

Instead, the work analyzes and documents the nature of and reasons for the rejection and acceptance of Jesus Christ and the message of Christ by Jewish people. "The ultimate purpose of this work," writes Jocz, "is to provide the reasons which make Jesus in the Christian interpretation impossible to Judaism. Such a task demands a clear recognition of the essential differences between Judaism and Christianity. These differences lie in the sphere of philosophical and theological thinking" (p. 9).

The interpretive crux of the book has to do with whether Judaism was affected by early (to A.D. 150) Christianity. Jocz draws extensively on Talmudic literature to argue that Judaism developed a conspiracy of silence against Jesus Christ and Jewish Christians. The exceptions to this are found in references to the *minim* which Jocz interprets as a designation for Jewish Christians. He concludes that Judaism was "deeply affected by the rise of Christianity and was pushed in the opposite direction. The opposition between the two creeds is thus an integral part of their separate existence" (p. 10).

The remaining part of the book pursues the issue of how Christians by imposition, coercion, or proclamation in word and deed presented the person of Jesus Christ or the Christian faith to Jews. Among the most prominent missionaries to the Jews have been Hebrew Christians. These are given due recognition, and their work is highlighted. In the concluding chapter, "Judaism and Christianity," Jocz identifies the theme of the dialogue between synagogue and church as "to the why and wherefore of their separate life. The answer to this question leads to the person of Jesus Christ" (p. 264). He concludes that the division between Jews and Christians is "between the man who in his **actual**, existential situation says yes and the man who in his **actual**, existential situation says no to the challenge which Jesus presents" (p. 322).

This reviewer is awaiting the sequel to *The Jewish People and Jesus Christ* which will treat the post World War II Jewish-Christian dialogue in light of the holocaust and the subsequent establishment of the state of Israel.

Allen R. Guenther teaches Old Testament at Mennonite Brethren Biblical Seminary, Fresno, California.

The church cannot afford to fail to think through in fresh terms the evangelistic task in each generation. The new generation always faces a situation different from any other, and that situation should be taken seriously in shaping the church's response. God has never spoken to humankind in a cultural and historical vacuum. The church cannot afford to try it.

This does not mean we should be looking for ways to domesticate and accommodate the gospel in order to make it as innocuous as possible. The entry of the gospel into the world in the person of Jesus Christ was notable for the way it shook the foundations of culture and people.

It is not surprising that in our day we can observe opposition to the Christian message taking various forms, according to the cultural context. Two examples out of contemporary experience will illustrate the point.

Over the past century the Christian message has met a powerful opponent, particularly in Western culture, in the form of science. Skillful popularizers like Jacob Bronowski and Loren Eiseley have helped convey the message that science offered us "both material abundance and substantive excellence . . . based on superior reason [that] provides physical liberation and encourages a certain liberality of the mind, a tolerant spirit consistent with principles and ideals like free speech and thought and human progress." But David Paul Rebovich goes on to observe that "over the last two decades, this optimism about science [has] waned." Science is now widely perceived as "the means to control, destroy, and replace man and nature, while breeding a mathematical and bureaucratic cultural conformity." (*Society*, July-August 1981.) Men and women increasingly look elsewhere for answers to questions related to meaning in life, yet in the recent TV series, *Cosmos*, Carl Sagan argued "that science, rather than religion, traditional philosophy, or politics is the path to redemption." The contest continues.

One of the taunts Christians in many parts of the non-Western world face is that Christianity is a foreign religion. But as John Onaiyekan says in the March 1981 *Nigerian Christian*, to say that Christianity is foreign is not to say much. Quite obviously it came to Africa from another part of the world, agents who were not themselves African brought it, and they introduced tenets which were not previously found in Africa. But such chauvinism is not sufficient grounds for rejecting anything out of hand. Onaiyekan goes on to point out that Islam is equally foreign in Africa and even traditional religion has changed continually over time. To establish the country of origin is not the same as establishing the claim to truth.

To be responsible evangelists in our time requires that we take the context seriously but not let that control us. The writer of 1 John 1:1 put it thus: "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched—that we proclaim concerning the Word of life" (NIV). The evangelist's authenticity and power result

from personal encounter with the living God.

During World War II a Belgian student who was active in a Bible study group wrote to a friend, "We are hungry most of the time and with little to do: but we have formed a group for studying the Bible. It is the only Book which does not tell lies about man." D. T. Niles, one of the great Asian evangelists of the past generation, used that anecdote to introduce a study of human nature based on the teachings of Jesus. Niles lists ten assertions Jesus made:

1. Every human being needs a change of direction. Each of us is born facing the wrong direction. (Mk 1:15)

2. Every human being needs the discipline of a dominant desire. In our original state, our various parts obey their own impulses. (Mt 18:8,9)

3. Every man and woman needs integration in order to overcome the dividedness within our own personalities. (Mt 6:22-24)

4. Each one of us needs stability. We need to be delivered from captivity to our circumstances. (Mk 4:15-19)

5. Every human being needs to be totally renewed in order to be freed from incompleteness and distortion. (Jn 3:3-6)

6. All of humankind needs health. Yet each individual is ill. (Mk 2:17)

7. Every man and woman needs a revelation of God from God. No one can know the Father unaided. (Mt 11:27)

8. Each human being needs to be found—rescued from lostness. (Lk 19:10)

9. Each human being needs to be set free. In our natural state, all of us are bound. (Jn 8:34-36)

10. Everyone needs to achieve harmonious relationship with fellow humans. Left to ourselves, we do not admit to being our brother's or sister's keeper. (Mt 5:43ff)

(*That They May Have Life*, pp. 45-46)

In the face of such realism about the human condition, Jesus offered himself as savior. Jesus said, by contrast to the thief who comes only to steal and kill and destroy, "I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly" (Jn 10:10).

This singular conviction guided the early Christians in their evangelization. The Apostle Paul crystallized this conviction for the entire church with his statement in Romans 1:16-17: "I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile. For in the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: 'The righteous will live by faith.'"

Paul knew his world thoroughly. He could adapt in language, food customs, thought patterns, or protocol to meet the demands of each situation. But he made each adaptation without altering or compromising the life-changing message of which he was servant-steward (1 Cor 9). His goal was to present what he had experienced as truth with clarity while respecting the integrity of that truth. —Wilbert R. Shenk